A CONTRITE AND HUMBLE HEART.

WITH

Motives and Considerations to prepare it.

A Contrite and Humble Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Psal. 50.

Prepare your Hearts to God, and Serve Him only, 1 Sam. 7.

The Fourth Edition. Approv'd.

Printed in the Year 1698.

TO THE READER.

THE Subject *which I treat of, is the best of Hearts*; *a* Contrite *and an* Humble *One. A* Heart *which is the Price of Heaven. An inestimable Jewel, which deserves our selling all we have to purchase it. What disadvantages it may have suffer'd in my hand, who have prepar'd and fashion'd it according to my Fancy, I pretend not to excuse. As rough, and as unpolish'd as it is, the Jewel is entire; the interior Value of it, is the same within it self, and that's abundantly sufficient to attone for all. Besides,* Contrition *and* Humility *affect not the advantage of a Modish Outside; plain Sincerity becomes them infinitely more. An humble Penitent, who has an angry God to*

pleaſe, and trembles under his Almighty Hand, has ſomething elſe to think of.—When a Magdalen *once comes with Penitential Tears, to bathe her Saviour's Feet, ſhe quite forgets her Looking-glaſs; and comes without conſulting it. She brings her precious Ointments with her; but theſe are only for her Lord: They are not, either to* adorn *her ſelf, or* pleaſe *the Company.*

The Method *I have follow'd, may perhaps, ſeem Arbitrary, and require a line or two to juſtifie it. I begin with the* Love of God. 1. *Becauſe it is the* Firſt, *the* Greateſt, *and indeed the* Whole *Duty of Man.* 2. *Becauſe altho' the* Practice *of Repentance commonly begins with* Fear, *goes on with Hope, and ends in* Love; *yet, where our Practice ends, our* Theory *begins; and what is* laſt *perform'd, is generally* firſt *deſign'd, and principally aim'd at.* 3. *Becauſe there is no*

ground for either Hope or Fear, before we Know our Duty. When we know it, and consider well how little we observe it, then it is that we begin to tremble at the thought of our appearance at the Bar: The Terrour of a Living God *awakens us, and makes us sensible, how* fearful *a thing* Heb. 10. 13. it is, to fall into his Hands. *For this Reason, in the second place, I shew the general* Motives *of our* Fear: *Which, to prevent Despair, I counterballance with the* Motives *of our* Hope: *And, after all, because Presumption is the greater danger of the two, (our Pride inclining us to think Repentance easie, and our Self-Love daily tempting to defer it,) therefore I have taken care to shew the* Danger of Delay. *These* Preparations *I thought proper for a* Contrite *and an* Humble Heart.

When I describe Contrition, *I en-*

large much more upon the Resolutions *of Amendment, than the* Sorrow *due to Sin; because these Resolutions are commonly the more neglected of the two. A little Melancholly, or a little Tenderness of Nature, with no more than meerly Self-Love in the Case, may oftentimes produce a sensible Concern, and even Tears, when we reflect upon the danger we are in: Tho' all this while, our darling Humours, our beloved Sins, are every jot as dear to us as ever. Some slight* Thoughts *we have, in* general, *of doing so no more: But these are only superficial: They produce not a sincere and hearty* Detestation *of our Crimes: They are to God, what our Compliments are to our Neighbours; these are* Words of course, *and those are* Thoughts of course; *both signifie just nothing.*

These two Sections of Contriti-

on

on * *have been printed a-part, by One who* Sign'd *the Paper as his Act and Deed; inviting others to* take Pen in hand, *and do the same. I Sign it not with my Hand; but only wish, my Reader and my self, may Sign it with our Hearts.* * 91. Intr. Par. 1. Ch. 21.

In the first four Sections of Humility, *I offer little or nothing of my own. It would not have become me, to pretend to much Acquaintance with so rare a Vertue. And besides, in such a Matter, so extremely disagreeable to our corrupted Nature, there was need of more Authority than mine.*

I Conclude with the Character of a Good Christian. *Having described his* Heart, *I thought it would not be amiss to finish the remainder of his* Character. *In this also, I advance not a word of my own. Should I presume to draw a* Christian *to*

the Life, 'twould be in me as great a Vanity, as if my Reader should pretend to sit for the Picture. I produce the Scripture *chiefly, and the* Fathers; *now and then a Modern Author: Any helping Hand was welcom in so difficult a Piece.*

No matter Who I am, I am a Son of the Church; and submit my self entirely to Her. † *My Name is* CHRISTIAN, *and my Sirname* CATHOLICK; *the rest I have leave to conceal. God's Honour, and my Neighbour's Good, is all I aim at: And, as to either of these Designs, I have no other Name, but what is altogether useless.*

† S. Pacian B. of Barcelone.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN this Edition, I have alter'd nothing but the last Section of Humility, in which I have omitted three Articles. I was advis'd to it by a Friend; and would not argue the Matter with a Person, whom I have so much reason, to think wiser than my self. As to my own Judgment, I am still of a contrary Opinion; and should not have so easily submitted, had I not reflected, that I ought to practise the Humility I Preach.

MOTIVES OF LOVE.

SECT. I.

How much it imports us to Love God above all Things.

WHEN the *Pharisee* ask'd our Saviour, *Mat.* 22. 36. *What is the great Commandmandment in the Law?* Our dear Redeemer, who came to perfect the Old Law, who came to change the Law of *Fear* into a Law of *Love*, who brought down Fire from Heaven, to enflame our Hearts, reply'd, *ver.* 37, 38. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind. This is the Great Commandment.*

I fear, that many of us little think how *Great* it is. We little reflect on the one side, how great our *Obligations* are to love our God; and on the other side, how great are the *Advantages* which cannot fail to attend this Love. We little consider, how great our *Ingratitude* is, if we omit our *Greatest Duty*; how great our *Folly* is, if we neglect our *Greatest Good*.

SECT. II.

That the Love of God is our Greatest Duty.

TO make it plainly appear, that the Love of God above all things, is the *Greatest Duty* of a Christian; one would think, it were enough to shew, that 'tis a Duty which comprizes all our other Duties; that it is the Total Sum of Christianity; and that without the least hyperbole, it is the *Whole Duty of Man*; because, all other Precepts whatsoever, only are so many Branches of [illegible] *Great Commandment*, which is the Root of all the rest. St. *Cyprian* calls it the *Grand Epitome* of all our Obligations. And were it necessary, it were easie to demonstrate, that as God is therefore infinitely Perfecter than

Serm. de Orat. Domin.

than all his Creatures, becauſe He really contains in his own Eſſence all Perfections whatſoever; ſo our *Obligation* to love him, is incomparably greater than all other Obligations, becauſe it eminently comprehends them altogether.

This is enough to give us a confus'd Idea of our *Duty* at a diſtance. If we draw the proſpect nigher, we ſhall find an infinite variety of preſſing Motives which enforce our Obligation. Every ſingle Excellency of the Object we adore is all divine: No ſhadow thereof any Blemiſh to obſcure thoſe Charms which challenge our Affection: Nothing in our God, but what is infinitely amiable, and deſerving infinitely more than *All* the Love that we are able to return. Since therefore All and every one of his innumerable Excellencies are unlimited and boundleſs; ſince they All and every one deſerve a ſuitable Eſteem, ſince they command our Love as much as they deſerve it: Hence it follows clearly, that our Duty is as boundleſs as their Merit; and that, as St. *Bernard* ſays, *There is no other Meaſure of our Love, than Loving without Meaſure.*

Amongſt the numberleſs variety of thoſe Divine Perfections, which *the Eye has not ſeen, nor the Ear heard, nor have enter'd*

ter'd into the Heart of any Man; 1 Cor. 2. 9. There is one which we are more acquainted with; there's one, which in a manner makes the reſt our own; and which of all, is the moſt apt to make a ſenſible Impreſſion in a generous Heart; I mean, that of a *True Friend.* We read, in *Eccleſiaſticus*, 6. 15. that *there is nothing comparable to a* True *and Faithful Friend*: And that, in the Ballance of the Wiſe, *He weighs much more than all the Gold and Silver in the World.* As there is nothing better upon Earth than a *True Friend*, ſo there is nothing more pretended to. And as the World deceives us moſt, where we expect it leaſt, ſo there is hardly any thing in which it more deceives us, than in this. Of all that read theſe Lines, perhaps there is not one, who has not been already very much miſtaken in a *Friend*; and 'tis no wonder, if we always are ſo, 'till we raiſe our Hearts above this World, and fix them there, where we are ſure to find a *True* and *Faithful* One; who Loves us *gratis*, always Lov'd us; Lov'd us even *when we were his Enemies*; and will for all Eternity, continue the ſame Love, unleſs we prove *ungrateful*, and refuſe to love him above all things, as He very well deſerves.

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He loves us *gratis*: Not for any Good He gains by it, or any little Service we can do him. He cannot ſtand in need of any of thoſe Goods, which every moment He beſtows upon us. *Thou art my God*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 16. 2. *My Goodneſs extends not to Thee.* When we have done all we can, *Luke* 17. 10. *we are unprofitable Servants*: We have done our ſelves the greateſt good we can imagine, but our God is not a jot better for't. *The Fountain*, ſays St. *Auſtin*, *Lib.* 10. *de Civ. is not better for our drinking at the Stream, nor the Sun the better for our walking by his Light.* If I may uſe St. *Paul*'s Expreſſion, 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. *He ſeeks not what is Ours, but Us.* He ſeeks for nothing but our Love, and even this Command he lays upon us, meerly for our Good, *Deut.* 10. 12, 13. *And Now*, ſays He, *What does thy Lord thy God require of thee, but to Love Him with all thy Heart? which I command thee, this Day, for thy Good.* Behold, dear Chriſtians, a *True* and *Faithful Friend*! And ſee how you can anſwer it to your Good Nature, if you do not love Him.

He always lov'd us; always thought of us; not only all of us in general, but every one of us; and lov'd us with a Love

Love eternal as Himself. He says, in the Prophet *Jeremy*, Ch. 13. 3. *I have lov'd Thee with an Eternal Love; therefore with loving Kindness have I drawn Thee.* And what more powerful Attractive can there be, to *draw* us to Him, than that *Loving Kindness* which from all Eternity, took care of our Concerns, contriv'd our future Happiness, and drew a Scheme of all the necessary means to bring us to it. Except himself, He hardly thought of any thing but Us; our first Creation, our Redemption, our Salvation, were always in his Eye; they were the Eternal Entertainment of his Mind; they were the Great Design which gave occasion to the first Production of this World, which we ungratefully prefer before Him, though He made it for us, *Eccl.* 9. 14. *Never forsake your Old Friend, your New one will never be like Him.* Alas! who can help it, if we will be so *ungrateful*, and forsake so ancient a Friend? We may be sure, it is impossible to find a new one comparable to him.

He lov'd us, even *when we were his Enemies.* 'Tis true, the first Production of the Universe was proof enough; and no Man can deny, but that so great a Gift bestowed upon us for our Use, abun-

abundantly sets forth the Greatness of his Love. But yet the whole Creation of the World, is nothing to the constant Conservation of it for our sakes, who have so *long* so *much* abus'd it. If the first bestowing of a more than ordinary Favour, without any previous Merit on our side, be such an Argument of more than ordinary Love, what is the constant Repetition and continuation of the Same so long a time; although the longer we enjoy it, we demerit more and more, and are as *obstinate* in our *Ingratitude*, as He is *constant* in his *Kindness*? Was there ever any *true* and *hearty Love* like this! St. *Paul* expresses some resemblance of it in a second Letter which he writes to the *Corinthians*, and declares his readiness to serve them, 1 *Cor.* 12. 15. *Though* (says he) *the more abundantly I love you, the less I am lov'd.* We read it in the 12*th* Chapter, which relates his Rapture into the third Heaven: And without all doubt, this *Love* of his was copied there from the Divine Original. If one small Spark of this Celestial Love had such a wonderful effect in the Apostle's Breast: What can we say or think of that immense and boundless Fire of everlasting Love, which no Ingratitude of Man was ever able to extinguish!

tinguish! Though our God foresaw how much it was in vain to court our Love, although He was not ignorant that his Affection for so base, and so unworthy Creatures, would be more despis'd, the more he labour'd to endear us to him; though he knew before-hand, the unparallel'd Ingratitude of Man: Nevertheless, he sent his only Son to save us; He could not hold his Hand; He could not deny himself the Satisfaction of being infinitely Kind. *Be astonish'd, O ye Heavens, at this!* Jer. 2. 12.

St. *John* discourfing of this Love, takes notice of no other Motive of it, than our *Gratitude*; our indispensible Obligation to be Grateful to so *Good a Friend*. We *Love him*, says he, *because he first Lov'd Us*, 1 Jo. 4. 19. He does not say, because He's infinitely Good and Perfect *in himself*, but because he has been infinitely Good and Kind *to us*. His Reason I gather from the 12*th* v. of the same Chapter, where He says, *No Man has seen God at any time*; and the 20. where he adds, *How can a Man Love God, whom he has not seen?* If we had ever seen him *Face to Face*, 1 Cor. 13. 12 as all the Blessed Spirits do in Heaven, we should then have lov'd Him *here* as they do *there*; The very *Sight* of Him (although

though He never had been Kind,) would have transported us beyond all thoughts of any thing but Him; it would have been impossible to entertain the least impression of any other Love, in Competition with him. But, because this Happiness is not to be expected here, where 'tis impossible to *see him as he is*, 1 Joh. 3. 2. Therefore, S. John *the Disciple whom* JESUS *Loved*, Jo. 21. v. 7. who by Experience knew, that no Impression sinks deeper in a Generous Heart, than the indearing Obligation of returning Love for Love, pleads nothing else but *Gratitude*, for the fulfilling of this Great Commandment; *We Love him*, says he, *because he first Loved us*, 1 John 4. 19.

There's nothing more obliging, than the *Love* of a *True Friend*; and nothing else obliges us without it. Whatsoever the interior value of a Benefit amounts to, when we cast it up, the Obligation is not tax'd by any other weight or measure, than his *Love* to whom we stand indebted for it. In this Case, *Ingratitude*, of all Crimes, is the most unpardonable, a Crime so base, which Humane Nature so abhors, that even the Worst of Men, who are asham'd of nothing else, can never endure, that any Man

Man should either *say* or *think*, They are *Ungrateful*. Other Sins they publish to the World, but this they always labour to conceal. And tho' I scarce can think of any Wickedness so infamous, but some have been so Wicked as to Glory in it; yet *Ingratitude* is so *Unworthy*, carries so much *Baseness* in the very Front of it, that I could never hear of any that were ever Proud of being thought *Ungrateful*. Rather than a Man should think, They are so, they invent a thousand frivolous pretences to disown the Obligation; they quarrel with the Benefit; revile the Benefactor; and that they may deny a *less* Ingratitude, they hide it with a *greater*. So asham'd they are to own this Fault, that they had rather *be* a thousand times ungrateful, than be once *esteem'd* so.

This is the Crime which many of us are so Guilty of, although we are as much *unwilling* to *believe* it, as we are *asham'd* to *own* it. And one of the most notorious Aggravations of our great *Ingratitude* is this; that we not only are so, but are in a manner quite insensible of being so. Because our God is infinitely *more* our Friend than any other can be, therefore we regard him infinitely *less*. We cannot without Indig-

dignation, observe one Man ungrateful to another: *The very Story of an ungrateful Action*, says *Seneca*, *puts us out of all Patience, and gives us a loathing for the Author of it. That inhumane Villain, we cry, to do so horrid a Thing!* And yet, when we observe, how horribly ungrateful a poor miserable Creature is to our Creator, we take little notice of it; we regard it with a cold indifference, as if we were content it should be so.

We cannot plead in our defence, that we are ignorant, how much we stand indebted to him for his Love: Alas! we all know well enough, that there was never any Love like his: So *True*, so, *Ancient*, and so *Constant*. If we plead Forgetfulness or Inadvertency; 'twill only make the Matter worse, by offering to mend it. *He is the most ungrateful of all*, says the Moral Philosopher, *who Forgets either the Benefactor, or the Benefit*. And yet, when we have made the best we can of an ill Cause, 'tis certain, that the *true*, if not the only Reason, why we are insensible of our *Ingratitude*, is, because we seldom call to mind, and almost quite *Forget*, how *Great* our *Obligation is to love* our *God*, *because he first loved us*, 1 Joh. 4. 19.

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All the Ends of the World, says the *Psalmist*, *shall Remember, and be Converted to God*, Psal. 22. 28. Let us *Remember* only, what a *Friend* God is; how infinitely better than the Best we have besides: Let us *Remember* only *This*, and we *shall* be *Converted*: We shall be asham'd of our *Ingratitude*, and *Love him* above all things.

SECT. III.

That the Love of God is our Greatest Good.

WHatever our *Duty* is, the very word *Commandment* is always odious to those who love their *Liberty*, and makes it so much harder to go down with them. But yet, if after second thoughts upon the matter, we discover that one Reason, why it is our Greatest Obligation, is, because it is our *Greatest Good*; the *Yoke* will then seem *easie*, and the *Burthen light*, Matth. 11. 30.

Three Things there are, which gain our Hearts, command our Inclinations, and in a manner, govern all our Actions; and these three Things are, *Honour*, *Profit*, *Pleasure*. Whatsoever we call *Good*, falls under one of these three Heads; 'tis either *Honourable*, *Profitable*, or *Delightful*. All these Three accompany the *Love* of God; and none of them are ever to be found without it. 1. To

1. To begin with *Honour*: I take for granted, No Man ought to judge, that *This* or *That* is *Honourable*, because the generality of Mankind, by mistake, is apt to value and admire it; but before he gives his Verdict, every Man should first consider well the Merits of the Cause. A Wise Man, though he liv'd amongst a Multitude of Infidels, and saw how much they honour and adore false Gods, he would not therefore presently conclude such Idols *Honourable*; but would rather laugh at those who are so blind, as not to see how little *They* deserve it. The Question is not, What we (by a Vulgar Error) are inclin'd to *honour* most, but, What it is that is most worthy of it? And this, upon a strict Enquiry, will appear to be the *Love of God*. *Honour*, at all hands, is agreed to be, a *Testimony* of some Excellence; and Nothing can be truly Honourable, if it be not truly *Excellent*. A Man has no just Title to his Honour (any more than what the common Duties of Civility amount to,) if he have not something in him more than ordinary, some Perfection to distinguish him, and raise him to a height more elevated than the lowest Rank of Men.

The Qualities which justly challenge Men's *Esteem*, are *Wisdom*, *Justice*, *Power*, and whatsoever raises us to the Perfection of our Nature. As for *Wisdom*; S. *Thomas* of *Aquine* has demonstrated, that no Man can be truly *Wise*, who does not love God above all things. *He may be*, says he, *a Wise Merchant*, *or a Wise Pilot*, a Wise States-man, or a Wise General; because he may be *Prudent in the choice of proper Means*, *well fitted to the* Purpose and *Design* of such Employments; but 'tis impossible, to be a *Wise Man*, without being *Wise in order to the proper End of* MAN, the great Design of his Creation, which is nothing but the Knowledge and the *Love of God*. A Magistrate, who is created meerly for the *Publick Peace*, whatever he may be in other things, if he be not *Wise* in order to *that End*, He is not a *Wise Magistrate*. And since all Mankind was created to be happy in an everlasting Union with God, whatever a Person may be in other Affairs, if he be not Wise in order to this End, He may be a Wise *What you please*, but he is not a *Wise* MAN. 2. 2. q. 47. a. 13.

As for *Justice*, I would gladly know, how any Man is throughly and truly *Just*, who is perpetually Guilty of the most

most notorious Injustice we can think of. Such is the Man, whoe're he be, that does not *love* his Maker as he ought. 'Tis true; He only is unjust to God; he only wrongs himself; he never wrong'd his Neighbour, may be, all his Life. But what would you say of a Steward who *only* cheats his *Master*? Would you think him a just Man, because he never cheats his Fellow-Servants?

As for *Power*: I confess, it may be *Great*, in some particular respects, but never can be *Absolute*, without the *Love* of *God*. I may say the same of *Power*, that St. *Thomas* says of *Wisdom*, A Man without this Love may be a *Powerful Prince*, a *Powerful Warriour*, or the like; because, without it, he may have all *Power* necessary for the main Design of Government, or War, *&c.* But, since without this *Love*, he neither can *Command* his *Passions*, nor himself; 'tis evident, he has not all the *Power* necessary to attain the proper End of Man's Creation. In a word, he is no Powerful Man, who is not Master of himself.

Thus you may plainly see, how these three Characters of *Wise*, *Just*, *Powerful*, which are the most esteem'd and *honour'd* in the World, are only Shadows, and imper-

imperfect Semblances, if separated from the *Love of God*. You plainly see, that it not only is the greatest *Excellence* of *Man*, most *Honourable*, most *Deserving* our *Esteem*; but that, without it, there is hardly any thing which truly is so.

2. As it is our *Greatest* Honour, so it is our *Greatest* Profit. St. *Paul* was so sensible of this, that though the Fervour of his Zeal appears in all his Writings, yet he never speaks with greater Emphasis, that when he has a fair occasion to discourse upon this subject. *Though I speak*, says he, *with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become like sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burn'd, and have not Charity, it profits me nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. He has reckon'd up the greatest Gifts, and best Advantages that he could call to mind; and yet he says, they All are Nothing to our Purpose, without Love. On the other side, the same Apostle teaches us, that all things else are profitable with it, though they never can be so without

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it. *We know*, says he, *that all things work together for good, to those who love God*, Rom. 8 28. The Secret of changing all things into Gold, has in vain, long time been sought for; but the Mystery of changing all meanest of our Actions into more than Gold, is much more easie to be found. *Whatever ye do*, says St. *Paul*, *do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. and every thing you do, will have more value in his Sight, than all the Gold and Silver in the World. The least Degree of Love, the coldest Act of Charity, even the giving *a cup of cold Water*, for the love of God, our Saviour tells us, *shall in no wise lose its Reward*, Matth. 10. 42. So true is that of St. *Austin*, *All things else are profitable, with it; Nothing else is truly so, without it.*

3. As it is our *Greatest* Profit, so it is our *Greatest* Pleasure: There is nothing so *Delightful*, even in this World, as to *Love God with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Mind.* 'Tis hard enough, I know, to make the World believe it: Because, although the Truth be in it self as clear and bright as the Meridian Sun, our Passions raise a cloudy mist before our Eyes, which intercepts the sight of it. All Persons, whose Affections are fix'd upon the Pleasures

of this World, can hardly ever be perſuaded, but that the *Love of God* is the dulleſt and the moſt inſipid thing imaginable. They eaſily conceive, that nothing is ſo *Honourable*, as to be a *Saint*; and that it is but a very little *profit* for a Man *to gain the World, and loſe his Soul*, Matth. 16, 26. The *Honour* and the *Profit* are agreed upon, but where's the *Pleaſure*? All that can be ſaid upon this ſubject, they are unacquainted with, they underſtand it not. He preaches in an *unknown Tongue*, who preaches the Love of God to thoſe who never lov'd him. *The Language of Love*, ſays St. *Bernard*, *is barbarous to thoſe who love not.*

As ſoon as ever they begin to turn their back upon theſe rotten Pleaſures, and *look* towards Heaven; preſently theſe Darlings of their Heart begin, as it were, *to pull them by the ſleeve*, as St. *Auſtin* words it, *and whiſper in their Ear*; *Do you forſake us? And from this moment ſhall we have your Company no more*, FOR EVER? *Shall we* NEVER *ſee you more?* Thus they ſollicit, thus they importune, and tempt them, to defer the time of their Converſion. *Do you think it poſſible* to live *without* the Pleaſures of this World? Ah Chriſtians! 'Tis not only poſſible;

Conf. lib. 8.

possible; it is the *Greatest* Pleasure in the World to live without them. 'Tis true, the very thoughts of *Separation* are like thoughts of *Death*: But then, we ought to reflect, that as we feel no pain when we are *Dead*, but all our pain is only whilst we are in *Dying*; So we feel the pain of leaving Worldly Pleasures, whilst we are *Deliberating* what to Do; But we are *Dead*, we feel no pain at all, when once we are *Resolv'd* upon't. *You are dead*, says St. *Paul* to the *Colossians*, Col. 3. 3. *and your Life is hidden with Christ in God. I am dead*, says the same Apostle to the *Galatians*, Gal. 2. 19, 20. *and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who lov'd me.* See the powerful effects of Love! It makes us as insensible to all the *Pleasures* of this World, as if our Inclinations were already *Dead*, and quite extinguish'd in us. *Cant.* 8. 6. *Love is as strong as Death.*

'Tis this Victorious *Love*, which frees us from the Tyranny of all those *Passions*, which *divide* the *Kingdom* of our *Heart*: A Kingdom *brought to Desolation*; *where Satan casts out Satan*; *and how can this Kingdom stand?* Matth. 12. 25, 26. How is there any true *Content* and *Satisfaction* to be found in it? A Man who

places all his Happiness in humouring his Passions, can never please himself, till he has pleas'd them all: And, since it is impossible to please *two Masters*, how is't possible for any Man to please *so many*? I might here appeal to each Man's private Conscience, for a farther Testimony of this Truth: But, if a Sullen Conscience (even when it is upon the wrack) refuses to confess, we have the Word of God, the best and cleerest Evidence we can desire: *The Wicked*, says he, *Isa.* 57. 20, 21. *are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest; whose Waters cast up mire and dirt; there is no* PEACE, *says my God, to the Wicked.*

On the other side, when once the *Love of God* has full possession of our *Heart*, when Christ *Governs* it by *Faith*, and the Holy Ghost by *Charity*; when *the Spirit of God* begins to *move upon the face of the Waters*, Gen 1. 2. it presently *commands the Winds and the Sea*, Matth. 8. 26. and there succeeds a *great Calm*. In a word, as much as Liberty is more agreeable than Slavery, as much as Unity is better than Division, as much as Peace, Content, and Ease, are more *Delightful* than perpetual Disturbance, Discontent and Pain, so much the *Pleasure* which attends the *Love of God*, is *Greater* than the *Pleasures of this World*. Had

Had it been possible for our Creator to oblige us all to *Love* him *gratis*, we might then have had more colour for our Crime. And yet, it would have been no more than what he very well deserves. He lov'd us *gratis*, without any possibility of Recompence: He humbled himself to repair our *Honour*; he quitted Heaven to promote our *Interest*; he suffer'd Torments to procure our *Ease*; and it would only be a suitable Return, if we preferr'd his *Honour*, *Interest*, and *Pleasure*, far before our own. But, as our kind and gracious God has order'd it to our Advantage, we are all oblig'd to seek our own true Honour, Interest, and Pleasure, and despise the false Appearances of Honourable, Profitable, and Delightful, which the World endeavours to delude us with.

When we have made the most we can of such an Obligation, 'twill amount to neither more nor less than what we daily see before our Eyes. Consider how the Ambitious, the Covetous, and the Voluptuous, love their Honours, Riches, Pleasures: Is it not plain, they love them above all things? And why should not we love God as well as Wordlings love the World? They love it *with all their Heart*, they desire nothing else, but

to enjoy it; *with all their Soul*, they have no passion for any thing else; *with all their Mind*, they think of nothing else, but how to make a Figure in it. Has God less Charms than the World? Or is a Flattering Friend (well known to be our greatest Enemy,) more amiable than the best of Friends, most true, most ancient, and most constant, who has always lov'd us better than we love our selves? Is it a greater honour for a Man to be the Devil's Slave, than be a Favourite of God? Is it a greater profit to be cheated in the end, than be eternally Rewarded? Or, are those Pleasures, which are always mix'd with intervals of Discontent, Anxiety, and Pain, greater than those Delights which are Unchangeable, Immortal, and Divine; which, even in this Vale of Misery, begin our Heaven upon Earth? Ah Christians! We have little reason to dispute the terms of such an Obligation, where the whole Advantage is entirely on our side: So great advantage, that we cannot truly love our selves, unless we *love our Lord our God, with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Mind*, Matth. 22. 38. This is not only our greatest Duty, but our greatest Good.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

That the Love of God is the chief Grace of the Holy Ghost.

I *Am come*, says our Saviour, *to send fire on the Earth*, Luke 12. 22. *and what do I desire, but that it may be kindled?* This he desires; for this he came; and this we pray for, in the Service of the Church; *Come Holy Spirit, fill the Hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy Love.*

The Holy Ghost came visibly at first, and prov'd his Presence by the Miracles he did. But yet a Spirit is not naturally sensible; and when he comes invisibly, he comes more like himself; nor have we any reason (when he dwells within us) to suspect, that he is less at home, because he less appears abroad. Although we do not see the fire descend, and rest upon our Heads; yet, if the Love of God enflame us, if it burn within our Hearts, if it appear in our Devotion, in our Conversation, in our Actions, 'tis enough, we then may hope, we have receiv'd the Holy Ghost, and that our Saviour verifies in us his Promise, which he made us, when he said, *he shall be in you*, John 14. 17. He did not come into the World, to visit the Apostles only,

and abandon their Posterity: Our Saviour did not send him to us, that he might immediately forsake us, but that he might remain with us for ever, to the end of the World. *I will pray my Father*, says he, *that he may abide with you for ever*, John 14. 16.

The *Spirit* of God *shall be in us.* 'Tis a solemn Promise of our Saviour himself; we cannot doubt of it, although we cannot but admire it with profound Astonishment, like that of *Solomon*, *Will God dwell* with us *on the Earth*. 1 Kings 8. 27. Will the Spirit of God not only dwell here with us, but within us! *If Heaven*, says he, *and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this House which I have builded!* If we find, that *Solomon* was thus transported when he look'd upon his Temple, and compar'd it with the Majesty of God, to whom he built it; may not we admire much more the Living Temple of the Holy Ghost? *If the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain* the Spirit of God, *how much less this* little *House* of Clay? Can we imagine, that this little Heart of ours, is more capacious than Heaven? Or, can our Heart contain our God, if Heaven cannot? Oh no! Our God is Infinite; he cannot be contain'd in either,

ther, and yet he dwells in both. Hear the *Psalmist*, *To thee I lift up my Eyes, O thou that dwellest in the Heavens*, Psal. 122. 1. Hear St. *Paul*; *You are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you*, 1 Cor. 3. 16. Compare both Testaments, the Old and New; and if you seriously believe them both, conclude, we have the same Assurance that God dwells in Vertuous Souls, as that he dwells in Heaven.

The Kingdom of God is within you, Luke 17. 21. Whersoever Majesty resides, the Court is there; and whersoever the King governs, there his Kingdom is. If the *Almighty* govern all the Passions, Motions, and Affections of our Souls; if once he be the Sovereign Monarch of our Hearts, if the Love of God give Law to all our Inclinations, the Holy Ghost is then as truly in us, as the King is in his Kingdom, and he is no otherwise in Heaven. This is that Heaven upon Earth which none can understand, but those devout and pious Souls, who by Experience, *Taste* and *See*, Psal. 33. 9. how *sweet* God's Kingdom is, where Christ governs by *Faith*, and the Holy Ghost by *Charity*; or (as St. *Austin* says,) *Whose King is truth, whose Law is love.*

A *Spirit*, having no proportion with *Place* (if we believe Philosophers,) is neither *here*, nor *there*, nor *any where*, of it *self*; but only by its *Operation* in a *Body*, which is in some *place*. When Angels formerly appear'd with Airy Bodies, they were truly and substantially present in those humane Forms, which they inhabited, by operating there. Whatever the Airy Body *seem'd* to do, the Angel *truly* did, the Angel *mov'd*, the Angel *walk'd*, the Angel *spoke*, discours'd, convers'd with Men. The Holy Ghost is likewise truly and substantially present in the Soul of a devout and pious Christian. He dwells in his Heart by operating there; his Heart becomes a Paradice on Earth: The *Love of God*, now planted in the *middle* of it, is the *Tree of Life*, Gen. 2. 9. The Holy Ghost himself becomes the Angel-Guardian of the Place, and like the Cherubim, defends it with a *Flaming Sword*, Gen. 3. 24. He gives him Life, *We live by the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 25. He gives him Motion, *We walk by the Spirit*; He gives him Speech, *'Tis not you that speak*, says our Saviour to his Apostles, *but the Spirit of God that speaks in you*, Matth. 10. 20.

So far you see the Parallel betwixt the presence of an Angel dwelling in an

Airy

Airy Body, and the Preſence of the Holy Ghoſt inhabiting in us. Only this difference there is. Philoſophers are puzzled to explain the *Virtue* and the *Operation* by which an Angel moves the Body it aſſumes; but Chriſtians, by the light of Faith, have this Advantage over them: They plainly read, and underſtand in Scripture, that the *Virtue* of the Holy Ghoſt, by which he moves and governs us, is *Charity*; and, that the *Operation*, which *with us* he produces *in us*, is the *Love of God* above all things. *God* the Holy Ghoſt *is Charity*, 1 John 4. 8. He is the Conſubſtantial *Love* of God the Father and the Son. If *Charity* inſpire us, if the *Love of God* direct us, govern us, and influence the principal Deſigns and Actions of our Life, we then may reaſonably hope, *we have not receiv'd the Spirit of this World, but the Spirit which is of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 12.

That Inclination which is predominant, and governs all the reſt, is uſually call'd the Spirit of a Man. If this be Love of Honours, Riches, Pleaſures of this World, 'tis an Ambitious, a Covetous, a Carnal, or (to ſpeak them all at once,) a Worldly Spirit. But if it be the Love of God above all things, without any competition of Creatures;

'tis a Virtuous, a Divine, a Holy Spirit: Then it is, that the *Love of God is diffus'd in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit which is given to us*, Rom. 5. 5.

St. Paul, when *he came to* Epheſus, and *found certain Diſciples*, demanded of them, *Have ye receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt, ſince ye believed?* Acts 19. 1, 2. And I am apt to think, it would not be amiſs, to put the Queſtion to the Chriſtians of our Age. You in whoſe *Minds*, Chriſt dwells by *Faith*, does the Holy Ghoſt dwell in your *Hearts* by *Charity?* Is your *Love* ſuitable to your *Creed?* Do you love God, as you believe he deſerves? Do you love him above all things? Your greateſt Care, is it to pleaſe your God? Your greateſt Grief, is it to have diſpleas'd him? In all things, which deſerve Deliberation, do you firſt conſult his Law, and make it the Rule of all your Meaſures? Examine well the whole Courſe of your Life; your Actions, Humours, and Deſigns. What is it that employs your Mind the moſt? What Thoughts are thoſe which cloſe your Eyes at Night, and open them next Morning? Are they fix'd upon the *Only Neceſſary?* Do they tend to Heaven? All things elſe, what are they? Are they *Nothing* in compariſon

compariſon of *That*? If ſo, you have receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt, the *Spirit* of God, *whom the World cannot receive*, Joh. 14. 17. But, if the Sovereign Inclination of your Hearts, be love of Honours, Riches, Pleaſures; if your greateſt grief and trouble, be your Diſappointment of Succeſs in theſe; if upon all occaſions you conſult your Inclinations, and the Maxims of the World: You then may anſwer, as the *Epheſians* did; Alas! we are but little acquainted with this Holy Spirit; we have ſcarce heard of him, we know not what he is: A Worldly Spirit we have more acquaintance with; but, as for the Spirit of God, he is a Stranger to us. We ſay our Prayers, we frequent the Sacraments, we are in the common road of cuſtomary Duties: But our Ambitious Spirit, our impatient Love of Honour, is ſuch, that we are more concern'd for an Affront, than for a Mortal Sin: Our Avaritious Spirit, our inſatiable Love of Riches, is ſo violent, that we had rather hazard the loſs of all the Heaven we pretend to, than expoſe the Treaſure we poſſeſs: Our Carnal Spirit, our incontinent Love of Pleaſure, is ſo paſſionate, that we had rather quit our Right to all Eternal Joys above, than any way deny

our

our selves the rotten Satisfaction we seek for here below: In short, we love this World so much, that if we might but always have it at Command, 'tis All we ask; we wish no more: *We have receiv'd the Spirit of this World*, 1 Cor. 2. 12.

I hope I may be pardon'd, if I am a little importune in pressing home this Question; *Have you receiv'd the Holy Ghost?* Acts 19. 2. Eternity depends upon't: Your Choice of Heaven, or Hell; Your being Children of God, or of the Devil; your being Sav'd, or Damn'd for ever: All This, (and what is *All*, if *This* be not?) All this depends upon the Answer to this necessary Question. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God*, says St. *Paul*, *they are the Children of God*, Rom. 8. 16. Compute your Actions, Words and Thoughts, from Morning to Night, from Day to Day: Does the Spirit of God direct and lead you? Or the Spirit of this World? If the Spirit of God, you are the Children of God: If not, hear what the Apostle says, *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. He is not a Brother of Christ, he is not an Adoptive Son of his Eternal Father; he has a Father in *Hell*, but none in *Hea-*

ven. Our Saviour plainly says, *If God were your Father, you would love me* above all things, *John* 8. 24. But because you do not, *you are of your Father the Devil*, ver. 44.

Let those who above all things love the World, consider this, and Tremble. Let them not gaze in vain, upon our Saviour ascending to his Father: Let them be assur'd, his Father is not theirs; and that, as certainly as he ascended to his Father in Heaven, they shall in time (unless they seriously repent) descend to theirs in Hell.

This was the Reason, why our Saviour told the Jews, *Whither I go, you cannot come*, Joh. 8. 21. As if he should say, I go to my Father; if he were your Father also, then you might bear me Company: But, since you *have receiv'd the Spirit of this World*, 1 Cor. 2. 12. as long as you are govern'd by the Spirit of another Father, you may in due time, follow him to Hell; but 'tis impossible (without sincere Repentance) you should ever follow me to Heaven: *Whither I go, you cannot come.* The Jews amaz'd to hear it, knew not what he meant. He told them the Reason: *I am from above*, says he, *I am not of this World*, John 8. 23. The Spirit which governs

governs all my Actions, is from above; 'tis not the Spirit of this World; 'tis the Spirit of my Father; therefore I go to him. But on the other side, *you are of this World, Ibid.* you are led by the Spirit of this World; and therefore, *Whither I go, you cannot come.*

Let us not flatter and deceive our selves, with vain Appearances of superficial Piety, which float upon the surface of our Souls; but sound the very bottom of our Hearts, and be assur'd, that if we find them chiefly fix'd upon this World, or any Creature in it; we may stand *gazing* with the Men of *Galilee*, we may contemplate, and admire the Ascension of our Saviour, but all in vain; all this will be no Comfort to us: Whither he goes, we cannot follow him. We cannot Ascend, unless we first receive the Holy Ghost; nor can we receive him, unless we first prepare for his Reception.

SECT. V.

That we ought to prepare our Hearts for this great Grace.

WHEN our Saviour was upon the point of leaving his Apostles, after he had been *forty days* discoursing with them concerning the *Kingdom of God*:

God: The laſt and moſt important thing he recommended to their Care, was, that they ſhould prepare themſelves for the receiving of the Holy Ghoſt: *He commanded them, that they ſhould not depart from* Jeruſalem, *but wait for the Promiſe of the Father*, Acts 1. 4.

Prepare your Hearts, ſays the Prophet; *Prepare your Hearts to God, and ſerve Him only, and He will deliver you*, 1 Sam. 7. 3. Prepare your Hearts to entertain the Holy Ghoſt, or elſe you never will receive him. Prepare Materials for *the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. His Temple is not to be built and finiſh'd in a day: We muſt have time to carry on the Work, and more than ordinary Preparations muſt be made: *With all my Might*, ſays the Royal Prophet, *I have prepar'd for the Houſe of my God*; becauſe, ſays he, *the Work is great; and the Palace is not for Man, but God*, 1 Chron. 29. 1, 2.

Our Heart has been profan'd with *Idols*: Our Ambition, Avarice, and Luſt, have had their ſeveral *Altars* in it; and from time to time, according as occaſion ſerv'd, have offer'd *Sacrifice* to Honours, Riches, Pleaſures. Such a *Temple* ſo *Profan'd*, muſt be demoliſh'd; and a New one built upon the Ruins

of

of it. *Make your selves a new Heart, and a new Spirit*; says the Prophet, *Ezek.* 18. 31. Although it be God's *work*, it is not only *His*, but also *Ours*. As much as lyes in us, we must co-operate and labour with him: And the more difficult it is, the more industriously we must endeavour to effect it. *With all our Might*, 1 Chron. 29. 2. with all our Industry and Diligence, we must prepare our Heart, that it may be a Temple of the Holy Ghost.

O *that we had but wings like a Dove*, (the Wings of that *Dove*, which once descended visibly upon our Saviour,) *then would we fly away, and be at rest*, Psal. 55. 6. Our Hearts would *fly away* from all things in this World, and *be at rest* in Heaven. If once the *Love of God* enflame our Hearts, with ardent and continual Desires of being happy with him, we shall find, that these *Desires* are *Wings* by which our Hearts aspire and mount to *Heaven*. But, if the Love of any thing in this World bind us to the Earth, we then shall find, that our *Celestial* Desires are clogg'd with *Earthly* Passions; and although we now and then, with a faint Sigh, look up to Heaven, yet our stronger Inclinations will always bear us down. He who is wholly disengag'd from

from all the Charms of a deluding World, he only is at liberty; St. *Austin* says, *The Wings of his Soul are free*; but if his Heart be any way *ensnar'd* with any other Love, *He then has Bird-lime in his Wings*; he cannot *fly away, and be at Rest.*

The Apostles themselves were not prepar'd for the receiving of the Holy Ghost, as long as they were satisfied with being *Happy* in our Saviour's Company *on Earth.* If any satisfaction here below, could innocently challenge so much place in their Affections, surely Innocence it self descending down from Heaven, had the best and cleerest Title to their Love. And yet, as long as they were of St. *Peter's* Mind, and thought with themselves, *'Tis good for us to be here*, Matth. 17. 4. 'tis good *to make our Tabernacles here*; so long we find they were not fit for the Reception of the Holy Ghost. *I tell you the truth*, says our Saviour, *'Tis expedient for you that I go away*, John 16. 7. because you love me with so little Resignation, and are so unwilling that I leave you; therefore *'tis expedient for you*, that I now ascend to raise your Hearts above the World, and carry them to Heaven with me. *If I go not away*, your Love will creep upon the Earth, the Spirit of the World will still

possess

poſſeſs your Hearts, the Spirit of God will find no Habitation there, *v. 7. The Comforter will not come: But if I depart*, if I (whom you ſo dearly love) aſcend, your Minds and Hearts will follow me to Heaven, they will be rais'd above the reach of all things in this World, the Spirit of the World will have no dwelling there; you then will be prepar'd for the receiving of the Holy Ghoſt, and when you are ſo, *I will ſend Him to you*, ver. 7.

When the Holy Ghoſt came, he *fill'd all the Houſe where they were ſitting*, Acts 2. 2. Where-ever he comes, he fills the Houſe, he takes it all to himſelf; And 'tis no wonder, being Infinite, he takes up ſo much room. As God would ceaſe to be immenſe, if there were any corner of the World in which he is not preſent, ſo the Holy Ghoſt would ceaſe to be our Infinite and Sovereign Good, if any corner of our Heart have any thing lodg'd in it, that excludes him. When once we have receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt, our Heart is the Kingdom of God. He is the Abſolute and Only Monarch that commands it; he cannot alienate the leaſt part of his Title to the Government; he cannot any way admit of a Companion in his Throne. Our Heart

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is the Throne of the Most High: And, if we remember what became of *Lucifer*, I hope it will suffice to make us sensible, how dangerous a thing it is, to place a Creature in the Throne of God, and make it *like the Highest*, Isa. 14. 14.

St. *Austin* wondring at the overflowing Measure of God's Holy Spirit in the Apostles Hearts, observes, that the reason why they were so full of God, was because they were so empty of his Creatures: They were very full, says he, because they were very empty; because they were so empty of the Spirit of this World, therefore they were so full of the Spirit of God.

O that our Hearts were empty; O that they were purg'd and cleans'd like theirs, from all inordinate Affection to this World; we then should be prepar'd like them, and ready to receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost. 'Tis a great Work, and will require some time; Why are we then so slow in undertaking it? *Why do we stand gazing?* Acts 1. 11. we *gaze*, we lift our eyes to Heaven, but yet we stand; our feet are fix'd upon the Earth. We prefer *Heaven* before *Hell*, of the two we had rather be there; but of the three, (if it were possible) we had rather be always here.

How

How long will you love Vanity? says the *Psalmist*, Psal. 4. 2. This World is nothing else but *Vanity*: *How long will you love* it? 'Tis *Vanity, and vexation of Spirit*, Eccles. 4. 16. How *long* will you delight in it? It flies before you *like a Shadow*, Ch. 6. 12. How long will you run after it? Alas! 'tis but a *Shadow* if you overtake it. *The World passes away*, 1 John 4. 17. 'Tis an unkind ill-natur'd World, which passes by us with a flattering Smile, and will not stay a moment with us. If it had ever been a true and faithful Friend to any Man, we should have some pretence to justifie our expectation of its being kind: But, since we know, it never was so to its greatest Favourites, we may be sure, it never will be so to us. The time will come, when we shall plainly see (although perhaps too late,) that *All* is *Vanity*; and we shall love no more what we are now so fond of. The Love of all those Trifles, which our Infancy was once much pleas'd withal, is now forgot; and we so much contemn those Childish Entertainments, that unless we saw the same in other Children, we should scarce believe, we ever lov'd them. As when we advance in years, we see the folly of our Childhood; so upon

upon our Death-bed, we as plainly see the folly of our Life: We then discover that the Honours, Riches, Pleasures of this World, are only so many serious Trifles, which are therefore more ridiculous, because more serious. When once the Period of our time approaches: When we are upon the Borders of Eternity: When we are, as it were, betwixt two Worlds, the End of this, and the Beginning of the next, which never will have end: Then it is, that all our Joys begin to vanish out of sight; they are the same to us, as if they never had been present: Then it is, that all our Miseries are every one in view, such Miseries as never can be past, but will for all Eternity, be always present: When once that hour comes, we shall be wise enough to undervalue and contemn what we so dearly love: But then, I fear, we shall be Wise too late: Our useless Wisdom will not rise in Judgment for us, but against us. O let us now endeavour to be Wise, and disengage our Hearts from all inordinate Affection to this World; that we may be prepar'd for the receiving of this Grace, which is the best and surest Pledge of the Eternal Glory, which we hope for in the World to come.

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MOTIVES OF FEAR.

SECT. I.

How much it imports us, to remember the Day of Judgment.

WHEN the Disciples ask'd our Saviour, What would be the *Sign of his Coming*, and *of the End of the World*, Matth. 24. 3. Our Saviour answer'd, That *the Day and Hour*, ver. 36. were not to be known before-hand, that his *Coming*, v. 27. would be like a flash of *Lightning*, when they least expected him. *Therefore*, says he, *v.* 44. *be ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man will come. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass a-*

way,

way, v. 35. The World shall have an End. The Son of Man shall come to Judge the World. The hour of his Coming, shall surprize us, when we *think not* of it. If we knew before-hand, we should certainly *prepare*. And we have much more reason, since we do not know it.

But, alas! our Saviour Jesus Christ himself has prophecied, v. 38. that *As in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, till the Day that* Noah *enter'd the Ark*, ver. 39. *and knew not, till the Flood came, and took them all away: So also, shall be the coming of the Son of Man.* He told us, how it would be, and every day we see how true it is. We mind nothing, but *eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage*; We seek for nothing but Divertion, Sport, and Pastime; We *now* Rejoice: But *then*, when the World ends, our Joys will end with it; *Then* we shall grieve; and not only *then*, but *for ever*. *Then all the Tribes of the Earth shall mourn*, Mat 24. 30. *They shall all mourn.* Not *All* the Just; Not *All* God's Friends, not *All* devout and pious Christians; who not only in their Baptism, but also during Life, renounc'd the Vanities and Pleasures of

this World: All these will have just reason to abound with Joy, at the approach of their so long desir'd, and everlasting Happiness: *They sow'd with Tears*, but now *shall reap with Joy*, Psal. 126. 5.

All the Tribes of the Earth; All those whose Hearts were always fix'd upon the *Earth*; upon the Honours, Riches, Pleasures of the *Earth*; *They shall all mourn*. And not without sufficient Reason. For, 1. They shall see the fatal *End* of all their transitory *Happiness*. 2. They shall see the sad *Beginning* of their everlasting *Misery*.

SECT. II.

That our Last Day is the fatal End of all our Transitory Happiness.

AS, on the one side, Nothing can be truly *Little*, which is Infinite; So on the other, Nothing can be truly *Great*, which has an End. Or *God is Great*, says the Prophet, *Baruch* 3. 25. *and has no End*. As if he had a mind to let us understand, that God himself, with all his other Attributes, would be but *little*, if He had *one*: That All this World is *therefore* inconsiderable: And that the Next is therefore to be valued above all things, because it is a World *without end*.

This

This is the common Misery, attending all our Happiness. All that is *past*, is Nothing: All that we enjoy at *present*, is but one poor moment: All that is *to come*, is every moment less and less, approaching nigher to the final period of its future Being, which is *Nothing*.

The very Thought of this, is so afflicting, that it puts a stop to all our joys, and makes us miserable in the full Career of our Felicity. We need no more, to damp our Spirits in the midst of our Enjoyments, than the importunity of this unwelcom Thought; *All this will shortly have an End.* The Paradise of our first Parents would have been to them no Paradise at all, had they foreseen the *End* of it. And when God pleas'd to interdict the eating of the fatal Fruit, He seem'd to judge, that nothing could be more effectual to contain them in their Duty, than to let them know, that *Death* should put an *End* to *All*, if ever they presum'd to eat of it. As it was then their chief and only comfort, to survey the vast extent and great variety of their Delights, and at the same time, confidently say, *all this is ours for ever*, if we please. So it had been impossible for any artifice of the malicious Serpent, to surprize them, or prevail upon them, if He had

not flatter'd them with some assurance, that they should not *Die*; but still be *truly* Happy, that is, happy *without End*.

The Devil does not now pretend to face us down, *We shall not die*: He knows that so notorious a Cheat, would never pass upon us. But yet, for fear least we should undervalue all the vain Allurements of a miserable World, he whispers in our ear, we shall not Die *so soon*: He has not the impudence to tell us, that the World will *never* end, but that it will not end *so soon* as we imagine: *Thou hast many goods*, says the *Rich Man* in the Gospel, *laid up for many years*, Luke 12. 19.

This is in short, the Sum of our Felicity on Earth. The Happiest Man that ever liv'd, could say no more than this. He could not say, that he had *All* which he desir'd; he could not but observe, by sad Experience, that he was still unsatisfied, and that his small Possessions were nothing to his great Desires. Nor could he say, that what he had, would *always* be his own: He could not but be well acquainted with the Truth of what *Man* is; he daily *Dies*; he every moment is upon his Journey to the Grave; *He wastes away, gives up the Ghost, and where is he?* Job 14. 10. However, he might say, to comfort his insatiable Soul: Although thou hast

haſt not *All* that thou canſt wiſh for, *Thou haſt many Goods*; and, tho' thou canſt not poſſibly enjoy them *always*, yet they are *laid up for many years*; thy Palace is magnificent, thy Entertainment ſplendid, thy Attendance numerous, thy Gardens are a Paradiſe of pleaſure and delight, thy Honour equal to thy Fortune, and thy Power equal to both; the World admires thee, courts thee, and almoſt adores thee; is not this enough? *Thou haſt many Goods.* And why ſhould any melancholy apprehenſions ſeize thy Spirits, and diſturb thy Mind, with fearful thoughts of loſing what thou haſt? There is no danger, whilſt thou liv'ſt, and thou art in the flower of thy Age, juſt-ripe for Pleaſure, healthy, vigorous, and like to live theſe *many years*: And, what haſt thou to do, but *take thy Eaſe, Eat, Drink, and be as Merry*, Luke 12. 19. as if thou wert to live for ever?

Behold, the beſt that we can make of the moſt happy State, we hope for here. We dare not look before us, leſt we ſee the end of all our Joys: We blindly doat upon theſe Darlings of our Paſſion, and endeavour to forget the miſery of their Mortality and ours. We are not able to ſupport a ſerious thought of our perpetual Decay; and though we love

our selves above all things, yet we hate the very sight of our condition; we cannot endure to look into our selves; and as an idle Solitude is ever troublesom; because we love no Company so little as our own; so the great reason, why the Company of any other person is so pleasing, is, because it hinders us from thinking of our selves.

The Greatest and most Happy Man, whose Heart is fix'd upon this World, would soon be Melancholy, if he had but leisure to reflect, that every Moment leads him to the period of his Happiness. The doleful Prospect of a future separation is so terrible, that he endeavours all he can, to think of nothing farther than the present. All the busie Agitation of his Mind, the Exercises of his Body, and the Pastimes of his Conversation, are delightful to him, chiefly upon this account; because they are *Diversions*; that is, because they fix his Mind upon the present Moment, and divert him from the melancholy thought, that *all his Happiness must have an End.*

If the bare thought of our approaching Period be so doleful, even at a distance, where uncertainty gives room to make the most we can of our Felicity; if, I say, the very thought of it be

so

ſo afflicting, what will the preſence of it be, when with our own Eyes we ſhall ſee that fatal End, which now we are ſo much afraid to think of? We now are merry and rejoyce, becauſe we baniſh from us the uneaſie Apprehenſion: But then, all thoſe who will be ſad Spectators of this doleful Scene, will be no longer able to divert themſelves from thinking of the Miſery they ſee before them. *Then all the Tribes of the Earth ſhall mourn*, Matth. 24. 30.

To cloſe the Eyes of any dying Friend we dearly love, is apt to move our Tears; altho' our other Friends, who yet ſurvive, are ſtill a comfort to us. But when their Deareſt Friend, the World it ſelf, begins to die; when all their Comfort, all at once forſakes them; when the Sun and Moon grow dark, and the expiring World begins to cloſe its Eyes: *Then they ſhall all mourn.*

When once that diſmal Day is come, which the Prophet *Zephaniah* calls the *Great Day of the Lord, a Day of Calamity and Miſery, a Day of Darkneſs, a Day of Tribulation and Diſtreſs*, Chap. 1. 13. When Cataracts of Fire ſhall ſhower down upon their Heads, as if the Stars themſelves fell from the Firmament: When in the laſt Convulſions of its mortal A-

the Earth trembles, and Hell it ſelf gapes under their feet: Then they ſhall plainly ſee the meaning of that Viſion in the *Revelations*, Chap. 10. ver. 6. which repreſents an Angel *ſtanding* with one foot upon the raging Sea, another on the trembling Land, *lifting his hand to Heaven, and ſwearing by him that lives for ever; Time ſhall be no more.*

Poor miſerable Wretches! There was once a Time, when Honours, Dignities and Titles, recommended them to the admiring World, whoſe Eyes were dazzled with the Glory of their Greatneſs: They were follow'd, waited on, and Celebrated in their Generation. But, *now*, alas! They ſhall be ſo *No more*. There was a *Time*, when they abounded in the over-flowing meaſure of their Wealth; their Palaces were ſumptuous; and all things ſuitable to the aſpiring Height of their Ambition: But now, *No more*: Their great Magnificence is buried in the Ruins of the World; their Gold and Silver melted down into the Earth, from whence it came; and all their Pride lyes levell'd with the common Duſt, to which all Things return. There was a *Time*, when all the ſinful *Pleaſures* of the World attended them; when they deny'd their Paſſions nothing

thing that they ask'd, when they had full Command of *All* that they desir'd, and rather cloy'd, than satisfy'd their brutal Appetites: But now, *No more.* Their Honour, Riches, Pleasures, All are at an End: Their *Time* is at an End: Their *Time shall be no more.*

When, as it happens frequently amongst the various accidents of Human Life, we are depriv'd of some particular Enjoyment which we passionately love; tho' we lament and grieve, yet we have still some Comfort left: 'Tis not a total deprivation of *All* that we enjoy: The Damage is supported by some other Pleasures and Conveniencies. If one Friend die, our other Friends survive. If one forsake us, we may find another faithful to us. Or, if they all abandon us, yet our misfortune is not universal: We have always something left, which we can think upon without affliction, and repose our wearied Thoughts. He that is dangerously Sick of one or two Diseases, is not at the same time, sick of all the rest. Whatever his Condition is, he always has some hopes of being better: And although these hopes are very little, they are still some little Comfort to a Man in Misery. But, when this Dread-

ful Day is come, which puts an end to Time, it puts an end to *All* their Hopes; *All* that they ever lov'd, or now desire, abandons them; their Inclinations are more lively than they ever were, and all are disappointed. *Then All the Tribes of the Earth shall mourn*, to see the fatal End of *All* their Transitory Happiness. But, alas! this is not All: They shall have much more reason to lament and grieve, when at the same time they behold the sad beginning of their *Everlasting Misery*.

SECT. III.

That our Last Day is the sad Beginning of our Everlasting Misery.

WE have seen the dreadful Symptoms of an Agonizing VVorld; the terrible Convulsions of expiring Nature, and the final End of *All* that Sinners love with so much Passion: An End of all Ambition, Avarice, and Pleasure; an End of all their Honours, Riches, and Amours; an End of Politick Designs, of Ancient Families, of Nuptial Joys; an End of idle Conversations, Balls, and Plays; an End of Beauty, VVit, and Courage; an End of all their Feasting, Drinking, and Diverting; an End of all their Mirth, Delight, and Pastime: And, which of all things

is

is most terrible to a despairing Soul, an End of Sin, but not an End of the Sinner; an End of Pleasure, but not an End of Pain; an End of Time, but not an End of their Eternity, which will Eternally Begin, and never have an End. After Hundreds, Thousands, Millions, not of Years, but Ages; if we may suppose that Heaven and Earth, with all that they contain, were chang'd into numeral Figures; at the foot of the Account, whatever it amount to, you may find it written, *Here Eternity begins.* Moreover, if you multiply this number by it self, and by the same Rule, multiply the Product of it, All is nothing to Eternity; Where-ever this innumerable number Ends, *Eternity Begins.*

If *All* be Nothing to Eternity, What will the inconsiderable number of those years which Sinners prodigally spend in Sin? What will it then appear to be? Will it not seem incomparably less than Nothing? And will not Sinners then have too much reason to lament, that for so short a Moment, so much less than Nothing, they have forfeited the Eternal Joys of Heaven, and incurr'd the everlasting Pains of Hell? *What is a Man advantag'd*, says our Saviour, Luke 9. 25. *if he gain the whole World, and lose him-*

himself? Alas! poor Souls, what Comfort is it, to have gain'd the World, and loſt your ſelves? To have loſt all Happineſs, and gain'd (if I may call it Gain) all Miſery, and *All* for *Nothing?*

What Pains, and by what Means they are to ſuffer, is a Queſtion fitter for our Curioſity than our Edification. 'Tis enough, to know as much of Hell, as the Apoſtle tells us of Heaven, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. *Neither the Eye has ſeen, nor the Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of any Man,* what unſpeakable Pains and Torments the Almighty has prepar'd in the *next* Life, for thoſe who have in *this* offended Him. 'Tis enough, that God is certainly as *Juſt* as He is *Good*, and therefore infinitely Juſt. 'Tis enough that the *Enormity* of Sin, which he ſo patiently endures, is aggravated by the Greatneſs of his Majeſty, and therefore infinitely *Infinite*. It follows evidently hence, that All (*a*) which God's great Wiſdom can invent, All that his Juſtice (*b*) can exact, and All that his Omnipotence (*c*) can put in execution, will be All employ'd to puniſh thoſe who

(a) *All the moſt effectual and moſt proper Means.*

(b) *By the Eternal Rule of his Decree.*

(c) *According to the rigour of the Sentence.*

who have offended him. It follows also, that it is as much impossible for any Man to comprehend the great excess of those Eternal Pains, as 'tis to understand God's Wisdom, Justice, and Omnipotence; All which are infinitely rais'd above the reach of Human Reason. However, we may easily conjecture something, by considering God's Justice in this World, and judging thence, what it may be hereafter.

If the Just themselves are so severely punish'd in this World, if it be true, as the *Psalmist* says, *Psal.* 34. 19. *Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous*; if even God's Friends, who are so faithful to him, undergo such Punishments for little failings in their Duty, what will become of his Enemies, who forfeit all their Title to his Friendship, by their grievous Sins?

If in the days of overflowing Mercy, which appear'd so eminently above all his Works, he gave such signal instances of his avenging Anger; if even when his Pity (in a manner) held his Hands, the fury of his Wrath broke loose, and with an universal Deluge laid the World so deep in Water, that amongst so many Millions, not a single Sinner could escape: What will become of miserable Sinners at the Day of Judgment, when the

the *End of Time* shall put an end to all his Goodness, all his Kindness, all his Mercy, and begin the Triumph of Eternal Justice? When our God will be *to us* no longer Good, no longer Kind, no longer Merciful, but only Just; Eternally and Infinitely Just.

Our Saviour Jesus will not then appear as the Physician (a) and Redeemer of our Souls, but only as the *Judge* of all our Actions: And even to his Friends (b) at his Right Hand, He will not shew himself in any other Quality: The very Sentence of their Happiness, will be an Act of Justice only, (c) not of Mercy: *Our Lord*, says the Apostle, *at that Day*, will be a *Righteous Judge*. 'Tis true, 'twas nothing but the merciful Assistance of his Grace, which heretofore enabled them to *fight*, and *finish* well *their Course*; but *now*, in the *Rewarding* of his Friends according to his Promise, (d) He's no longer Merciful, if we believe St. *Paul*, but only *Righteous and Just*.

(a) 'Tis too late to be Cur'd, or Redeem'd.

(b) As Judge he appoints them that place.

(c) Not an Act of Pardon.

(d) No longer inclin'd to Pardon.

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If *at that Day* He would be Merciful to any, He would surely be so to his Friends: And, since the Best and Faithfullest of all his Servants, find no Mercy (*a*) at their Tryal, Can his Enemies expect it? 'Tis call'd the Day of *Judgment*, to distinguish it from all these other Days of *Mercy*: And, if in *these* He shower'd down Fire from Heaven, 'tis no wonder, if in *those* the Stars themselves will seem to fall: If *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were consum'd, 'tis easie to believe, that then the Earth will All of it be laid in Ashes. But, alas! this Universal Deluge of devouring Fire, together with the Darkness of the Sun and Moon, the roarings of the Sea, and howlings of the Wind and Air; All this is but a Prelude to the Misery of Sinners: This is only the *Beginning of their Sorrows*, Matth. 24. 8. This is nothing but their Summons to appear before the Bar: And, 'tis the dreadful Apprehension of their Judgment and Damnation, which torments them with an agonizing Fear.

(*a*) *'Tis too late to ask for Mercy.*

There was a Time when Life was sweet; but now they hate it. There was once a Time, when the despair of Living was their greatest Pain; but

now

now the Scene is chang'd, and the despair of dying, is incomparably more tormenting. *In those days,* says the beloved Disciple, *Rev.* 9. 6. *Men shall seek Death, and shall not find it; They shall desire to Die, and Death shall fly from them.* There was a Time, when Sinners laugh'd at all the Fears and Apprehensions of this Day; but now the *Time of laughing,* Eccl. 3. 4. will be past; nor will it be, as *Solomon* calls it, *a Time to mourn*: it will not be a *Time*, but an *Eternity* to mourn. *Then all the Tribes of the Earth shall mourn.* Not only those, who whilst they liv'd, were thought to carry visibly the mark of Reprobation in their Foreheads; but also, such as liv'd great Saints in the esteem of Men, and died great Sinners in the sight of God; shall then desire to die again, and *seek for an Eternal Death, and shall not find it.* Then shall their conceal'd Abominations, all their shameful Actions, all their secret Works of Darkness, come to light. Then *nothing* shall be *covered*, nothing so industriously *hid*, but what *shall be reveal'd*, Matth. 10. 26. to all the World. Nor only those who took such care to hide their Sins from others, but even those who formerly were us'd to hide them from themselves, shall clearly see the

Malice

Malice of their palliated Crimes: *Then they shall see, and then they shall mourn,* Matth. 24. 30.

We now are willing to live peaceably and quietly within our selves; we do not much delight in the remorses of a guilty Mind; and therefore we contrive some kind of Conscience for every thing we do. We are uneasie at the thought of everlasting Pains; and therefore, if we ever take our selves to task, we rake together all we can, to make a favourable judgment of our State. As the Examen rather is design'd to please our selves, than God, 'tis generally very superficial. We look upon our Actions all in gross, without enquiring much into the drift and chief design of them. We look upon the outward shew; the approbation and esteem of Men; The Example of some, who pass for good and virtuous, and yet have often done the same as we do: Our being free (as we suppose) from many Faults which we observe not in our selves; our great abhorrence of some certain Sins, which we observe in others: Our being punctually and religiously precise in some small Matters, some exterior Mortifications, some particular Devotions which we take a fancy to: And thus we frame a

false

falſe Idea of the miſerable State we ſhall be found in, when we come before the Bar. We *now* are proud, and willing to excuſe our ſelves: But *then* the Teſtimony of our clearer ſighted Conſcience, will confound and humble us. Our Paſſions blind us *now*; we ſee not what we truly are: But *then* the Sun of Juſtice will ariſe, and ſcatter all the darkneſs which conceals us from our ſelves. The piercing Rays, the All-diſcovering Beams of *Truth* will break like Lightning, through the Clouds of our affected Ignorance, when once the *Son of Man* appears to judge the World.

If there were any poſſibility of cheating his All-ſeeing Wiſdom; of calling back the time of his indulgent Mercy; or eſcaping from the hands of his Almighty Power: Were there any poſſibility of this, or were there any Friend from whom the guilty might expect the leaſt aſſiſtance; it would be ſome little Comfort.

They had *once* a true and faithful Friend, who dearly lov'd them; came from Heaven to inſtruct them, and conduct them thither; liv'd a painful and laborious Life amongſt them; and although neglected, ſcorn'd, and perſecuted by them, yet continued conſtant

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in his Love, and to redeem them, paid their Ranſom with the price of his own Blood. But *now* their beſt and only *Friend* becomes their greateſt Enemy. He lov'd them once: But Love ſo *long* neglected, and ſo *much* abus'd, is now quite chang'd into a mortal and eternal Hatred. He invited all of them to come to *Him* whenever they had need of his Aſſiſtance, *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come to me All you that labour*: But *now* alas! it is too late to come: His Patience now is ſpent; and in the Fury of his everlaſting Indignation, He for ever baniſhes them from him, *Matth.* 25. 41. *Go from me ye accurſed.* Go *Ambitious* Souls, and leave your honourable Titles all behind you; go, and ſeek the beſt Preferment you can find, amongſt *the Devil and his Angels*; Ibid. *ver.* 41. Go, *Inſatiable* Miſers; go, and take poſſeſſion of that Miſery which you have purchas'd with the loſs of your beloved Treaſure: Go, *Voluptuous* Wretches; you, who formerly have wiſh'd your Flames might ever burn: Go *now*, and burn for ever, in the everlaſting Flames of Hell.

Behold, the dreadful Sentence we muſt All expect, unleſs we follow his Advice, who *then* will be our *Judge*,

Luke

Luke 21. 36. *Watch therefore*, says He, *and Pray always; that you may then be accounted worthy to escape, and stand before the Son of Man.* Alas! Our dear Redeemer takes no pleasure in Condemning us. *No Man*, says St. *Austin, who designs to strike us, bids us have a Care.* Our Saviour often warns us, often calls upon us, often *bids us have a care.* St. *Paul* exhorts us in his Name, *Rom.* 13. 11. *'Tis now the hour for us to rise from sleep:* 'Tis *now* the hour to go with Tears of true Repentance to the Throne of Grace; that *then* we may appear with Confidence and Joy before the great Tribunal of his Justice: 'Tis *now* the Hour to hearken to him, *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come to me, all you that labour*; that *then* we may be sure to hear him call us to him, *Matth.* 25. 34. *Come ye Blessed*; Come, and reap the Fruit all your Labours; Come, and take possession of those Everlasting Joys, which were *prepar'd for you, from the Foundation of the World.* Amen.

MOTIVES

MOTIVES OF HOPE.

SECT. I.

How unreaſonable a thing it is for any Sinner to Deſpair.

THE greateſt Myſtery of Chriſtian Morality, conſiſts in the equal ballancing of *Hope* and *Fear*, betwixt God's *Mercy* and his *Juſtice*; that we may neither be ſecure in Sin, becauſe he is ſo Merciful; nor yet deſpond, becauſe he is ſo Juſt. *Preſumption* and *Deſpair* are the two Rocks, 'twixt which all Chriſtians ought to ſteer an even courſe; and ſo avoid the One, as not to daſh upon the Other. 'Tis perhaps the greateſt Secret of the Devil's Art. He firſt inclines us to *Preſume*; and we no ſooner ſee the danger of it, but he tempts us to *Deſpair*. Thus

Thus he commences, thus he finiſhes his work.

I muſt confeſs, the greateſt part of Mankind being ſo inſenſible, ſo ſtupid, ſo immerſt in worldly Cares and Pleaſures, is enough to juſtifie the pious Zeal of thoſe who frequently proclaim the menaces of an offended Majeſty, and with the formidable noiſe of Hell, Damnation, and everlaſting Torments, labour to awake and rouze them from the Lethargy of Sin. But, when they are awake, and looking round about them, take a proſpect of their miſerable State; when every horrid Crime appears in its own dreadful Shape; when multitudes of paſt Offences croud into their Minds; and overwhelm their heavy Thoughts with a deſpairing expectation of no leſs than everlaſting Miſery: A'as! poor Souls, it is not now a ſeaſonable time to magnifie the Motives of their Fear. If ever Comfort and Encouragement were neceſſary to allay the Pains and Anguiſhes of a Deſpairing Soul: Now is the time. What ſhall we ſay? Tell them, they need not fear? Oh no! The malice of their grievous Sins is infinite; the danger of their lamentable State is greater than they can imagine: Let but their Hope be equal to their Fear, they cannot

cannot fear too much. How then ſhall we encourage their expiring Hope? I'll tell you how.

If God were only *Juſt*, and were not alſo *Powerful* and *Merciful*, a Sinner then might lawfully deſpair: But when God's *Power* and *Mercy* both concur to comfort the deſponding Heart of an afflicted Penitent, What can he wiſh for more? There are but two Conditions requiſite to qualifie the Perſon, upon whoſe aſſiſtance we depend, that we may ſafely hope, and with a loving confidence aſſure our ſelves of his Protection. The firſt is, that he *can* relieve us, if he will: The ſecond, that he *will* relieve us, if we pleaſe. *Will*, without Power, ſignifies but little: Power, without Will, ſignifies much leſs: But, when they *both* meet in the perſon of a *Friend*, to whom we always have a free acceſs; who certainly *can* help us, if he will; and no leſs certainly will help us, if we pleaſe: Then, let our *preſent* Miſery be never ſo great, let the approaching danger of our *future* Ruin every day ſeem greater, we may with trembling Hearts expect the helping Hand which *can* and *will* deliver us; but all our Fear can never exclude our Hope; it cannot rob us of that Comfort, Satisfaction, and Joy,

Joy, which ſo much Confidence in ſuch a *Friend* inſpires.

If when a Sinner ſtruggles with his Chains, endeavours to break looſe; and more he ſtruggles, more he finds himſelf engag'd; (which the All-ſeeing Wiſdom frequently permits, to humble a proud Soul:) If then theſe two great Truths were ſetled in his Mind, to wit, that God can free him, if he *will*, and that He *will* not fail to free him, if he pleaſe: O! with what pleaſure would he reliſh the aſſurance of this loving Confidence! With how much tranſport of a joyful Mind, would he recite thoſe words of St. *Paul!* 1 Tim. 1. 12. *I know in whom I have believ'd*; I know in whom I put my Truſt; I know, and *am perſuaded, He is able* to deliver me. I am aſſur'd, He is not only *Powerful* but *Merciful*; and therefore, I am certain, He both *can* and *will* aſſiſt me.

SECT. II.

That God can help us if he will.

Divinity and boundleſs *Power*, are ſo much the ſame, that no Man can deny the one, and own the other. There is no Truth ſo evident, in which the World ſo univerſally agrees, as God's Omnipotence. Every body knows, that No-

Nothing is impoſſible to God. 'Tis one of the firſt Truths which a Philoſopher demonſtrates, or a Chriſtian believes. *Almighty* is his Name, the Name we know him by, the Name He anſwers to, whenever we call upon Him.

What need I then diſcourſe upon a Truth, which every body knows? The Reaſon is, Becauſe a tho' we *know* it well enough, We very ſeldom, hardly ever, *think* of it.

We all *know*, Nothing is impoſſible to God: And that the lamentable State of a poor Sinner cannot be ſo deſperate, but that He can retrieve him. And yet how little do we think of this, when we are tempted to deſpair? Do we not then behave our ſelves as if we doubted of it? I am afraid, that at the beſt, we pray like him, of whom St. *Mark* makes mention, *Chap.* 9. 22. Lord, If *Thou canſt do any thing, have compaſſion on us, and help us.* I fear we often are incredulous, and have juſt reaſon to repeat *with Tears* his humble Prayer, *ver.* 23. *Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief.*

If *David*, that great Saint, 1 *Sam.* 13. 14. *according to God's Heart*, who looking back to take a view of all his paſt Iniquities, ſaw at a diſtance only ſome few Sins, which he had long ſince

wash'd away with Penitential Tears; if He could scarce support the terror of that melancholy Prospect, as he says himself, *Psal.* 38. 3, 4, 6, 10. and *all day long went mourning* for his Sins; if his *Heart panted*, and his *strength fail'd* him; if he had *no rest*, because he was *over-head in his Iniquities*, which *like a heavy burden* were *too heavy for* him; If He, I say, were thus perplex'd with *Fear*, and almost ready to *Despair* of his Salvation; Have not I just cause to apprehend much more the Danger of such Doubts in greater Sinners, who are almost surfeited with Sin, before they seriously begin to look behind them, and compute the terrible Arrears of all their past Offences?

I must confess, the Difficulties which occur in the Conversion of a Sinner, are insuperable, if compar'd to the weak Strength of our corrupted Nature; and if the possibility of working our Salvation be consider'd only with regard to Humane Frailty, there appears no hope of compassing so great a Work. Such is the Ignorance and Blindness of our *Understanding*; such is the Malice and Perverseness of our *Will*; our *Inclinations* are so prone to liberty; and the Restraint of our unreasonable *Humours* is so sensibly

ſenſibly uneaſie to us, that a thorough Reformation of our Lives is far above our ſingle Strength. Without the Grace of God, we neither have the Wiſdom to contrive it, nor the Courage to begin it, nor the Power to perform it.

But yet this Darkneſs of our *Reaſon*, though we cannot of our ſelves diſpel it, may be diſſipated by a lively Faith in Him, *who enlightens every Man that comes into the World*, John 1. 9. This depravation and Corruption of our *Will*, (altho' it be to us alone impoſſible) may, by the ſweet and forcible impulſes of a powerful Grace, be chang'd and rectified: This obſtinate Rebellion of our Appetite againſt the Rule of Reaſon, and the Precepts of a Chriſtian Life, (though we have often found our ſelves unable to reduce it to the terms of juſt Obedience,) may eaſily be conquer'd by Omnipotence.

If Sin have ſo much blinded us, that we can hardly ſee our Danger: If the Noiſe of Worldly Vanities have made us almoſt deaf to all good Counſel: If the Habit of our Sins have lam'd us, ſo that we can ſcarce'ly move a foot towards Heaven: If we are *blind*, *deaf*, *lame*, nay, even *dead* to God, and all that's good, (no Perſon can be in a

worſe condition than this:) All this is nothing to the *powerful* Hand of God: Such Miracles as theſe were his familiar Exerciſe on Earth, *Matth.* 11. 5. *The Blind ſee, the Deaf hear, the Lame walk, the Dead are rais'd to Life.* All this our God can eaſily perform, in favour of us, whenſoever He pleaſes.

Lord, if thou wilt, ſays the Leprous Man, *thou canſt make me clean,* Matth. 8. 2. Let the Diſeaſes of a ſinful Soul be ever ſo inveterate, ſo deeply rooted in the Heart, He clearly and diſtinctly comprehends the nature of them all: He knows exactly the proportion and virtue of his Remedies: And all of them obey the Word of his Command, *Matth.* 8. 3. *I will,* ſays he, *Be thou cleans'd*; (when once God ſays the *Word*, the *Work* is done,) *immediately his Leproſie was cleans'd.*

Create in me, O my God, Create in me a clean Heart, Pſal. 50. I ask not any thing but what is eaſie to Thee. Alas! it is to me impoſſible: But Thou, my God, canſt do it with more eaſe than I can ask it. Behold my Miſery with Pity and Compaſſion. Behold me indigent and naked, c'oath'd with nothing but the horrid Scurf of my Uncleanneſs. Behold me *Blind, Deaf, Lame*; and almoſt

moſt *dead* with a contagious Leproſie of Sin, which covers me from head to foot, and has not left a ſound part in me. Conſcious of my unworthineſs, after ſo long neglecting my Condition, after ſo long confiding in my own weak Strength, after ſo long deſpairing of my Health, becauſe I *thought* I could do any thing, and *found* I could not Cure my ſelf; Conſcious, I ſay, of my Unworthineſs, I ſcarce pretend to ask for *Mercy*: I only caſt my ſelf upon my knees and face proſtrate before thy Feet, expoſing and laying open all my grievous Diſtempers, which, every one of them (though I am humbly ſi'ent) every one ſpeaks loudly my Neceſſities, and begs, with all the moving Eloquence of Miſery, thy Pity and Aſſiſtance. I know my Sins provoke thy *Juſtice*, whilſt my Miſery appeals to thy Almighty Power: But thy faithful Servant *David* tells me, that the *Iſraelites* provok'd Thee alſo; and nevertheleſs, not for their ſake, but *for thy Name's ſake*, Pſal. 106. 8. Thou waſt pleas'd to *ſave them*; *that Thou might'ſt make thy mighty Power known.* This is the firſt Foundation of my Hope: I know the Credit of thy *Power* is engag'd in their behalf, who truſt entirely in it, firmly expect it, and depend upon it:

And therefore, in this poſture, I preſent my ſelf with loving Confidence before thy Feet, reſolving there to expect with all Humility and Patience, when thou ſhalt pleaſe to caſt an eye upon me, and either find the Benefit of being cur'd, or (which appears to me impoſſible) die in the Hands of an Omnipotent Phyſician. Ah my dear Jeſus! This is all that I can do: And even This, I cannot do without thy Grace: But, when I have done This, my Comfort is, that Thou canſt do the reſt: *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canſt make me clean*, Matth. 8. 2.

Dear Chriſtians, let us pauſe a while, and with a ſerious Attention, behold this Leper at our Saviour's Feet: Behold the lively Image of a Sinner, and the perfect Model of a Penitent: Behold both what we are, and what we ought to be: In his Diſeaſe, we ſee our Miſery; in his Behaviour, we ſee our Duty: In his Diſeaſe, we ſee the ſad effects of Sin; we ſee the ſtrong temptations and aſſaults of a moſt terrible Deſpair: In his Behaviour, we ſee the Fruits of true Repentance, we ſee the victory of a triumphant Hope, and the great comfort which attends a loving Confidence in God's Omnipotence.

O what a Comfort is it to an humble Penitent, to be aſſur'd, that as God *gives* him

him All he *has*, ſo He *can* give him All he *wants!* If we are almoſt quite oppreſs'd with thoſe aridities and deſolations of Mind, which none can know, but by Experience; St. *Paul* tells us, 2 Cor. 9. 8. *God is able to make all Grace abound in us:* If we labour under the perpetual violence of importune Temptations; the ſame St. *Paul* aſſures us, *Heb.* 2. 18. *God is able to ſuccour thoſe that are tempted:* If our Temptations are ſo ſtrong, and we ſo negligent, that after ſome Reſiſtance, we relapſe into our Sins; if we riſe again, and yet fall; if we renew our Reſolutions, and when we think our ſelves ſecureſt, are ſurpriz'd, and fall again; St. *Paul* aſſures us, *Rom.* 14. 4. *God is able to make us ſtand:* If having tryed all ways we can imagine, we are at a loſs, and know not either what to think, or what to ask; the ſame Saint tells us, *Epheſ.* 3. 20. *God is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think.*

Is any thing too hard for God? Gen. 18. 14. Can any thing be hard to him whoſe *Power* is infinite, and whoſe *Will* is his Power? 1 *Sam.* 2. 6. *Our Lord kills, and makes alive; brings to the grave, and raiſes up:* His Power accompanies our Souls as far as the gates of Hell it ſelf, and

brings them back again. Altho' your Soul, quite over-grown with ſin, may be (perhaps) in the All-ſeeing Eye of God, a much more horrid Object than the fouleſt Devil in Hell; nevertheleſs, go confidently with the Leper to our Saviour; croud in amongſt the Multitudes that follow Him; caſt your ſelf down upon your knees and face; ſay, with a truly *contrite*, truly *humble* Heart, *Matth.* 8. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean:* Then ſhall you hear him graciouſly return that comfortable Anſwer; *I will; be thou clean.* Then ſhall you be tranſported with exceſs of Joy, to find and feel the truth of what I now advance; to wit, that God not only *can* relieve us if he will, but alſo *will* relieve us if we pleaſe.

SECT. III.

That God will help us, if we pleaſe.

ALtho' God's *Power* be the firſt Foundation of our Hope, his *Mercy*, always ready to aſſiſt us, is the principal, if not the only *Motive* of it. This was the comfortable Meditation with which the Royal Prophet counterballanc'd all his Fears, *Pſal.* 26. 3. *Thy Mercy*, ſays he, *Thy loving Kindneſs is always before my eyes.* Without this Comfort, he would never have

have ſupported the remorſneſs of his Conſcience, *Pſal.* 50. 4. his *Sin* was *ever before him*: His continual Apprehenſions and frightful Thoughts would certainly have driven him into a deep Deſpair, had not God's *Mercy* alſo *always* been *before him*, Pſal. 26. 3. The very thought of God reviv'd his drooping Spirits: He could not ſo much as think of Him, without thinking of his Mercy: to be *God*, and to be *Merciful*, were to him one and the ſelf ſame thing, *Pſal.* 59. 17. *My God is my defence*, ſays he, *and the God of my Mercy*. If he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, with enflam'd deſires of being happy there; he ador'd that Mercy which preſerv'd the Angels, and rewarded them with Glory, *Pſal.* 36. 5. *Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens.* If he look'd down, and took a proſpect of this vale of Miſeries; he admir'd, to ſee God's Mercy ſtoop ſo low, to ſee it moſt appear, where there is moſt occaſion for it; to ſee it ſuperabound where Sin abounds, *Pſal.* 33. 5. *The Earth is full of his Mercy.* If he look'd before him, he beheld God's Mercy ſtarting firſt, preventing, and fore-running all his good Deſigns and Enterprizes, *Pſal.* 59. 10. *His Mercy will prevent me.* If he look'd behind him, he beheld the ſelf-ſame Mercy following

him, promoting, carrying on, and perfecting his good Endeavours, *Pſal.* 23. 6. *His Mercy ſhall follow me, all the days of my life.* Which way ſoever he caſt his eye, he ſaw himſelf defended and ſurrounded with God's Mercy, himſelf the Center, Mercy the Circumference, *Pſal.* 32. 10. *Him that truſts in God, Mercy ſhall compaſs him about*: Thus did this Saint, who once had been a Sinner; thus did he comfort and encourage his afflicted Soul, when ever the remembrance of his Sins oppreſs'd his Mind: And thus may we, in imitation of him, Thus may we alſo anſwer all the troubleſom ſuggeſtions of our panick Fears; confronting Sin with *Grace*, Juſtice with Mercy, Fear with *Hope*, and loving *Confidence* in him, whoſe Mercy ſtill is infinite, and always will be ſo, *Pſal.* 100. 5. *His Mercy is Everlaſting.*

All this, you'll ſay, is little comfort to a Sinner, who is day and night obſeſs'd with all the terrifying Spectres of a guilty Conſcience. Every body knows that God is infinitely Merciful. But yet the Word of God aſſures us, and it is a fundamental Truth which every Chriſtian is acquainted with, *Matth.* 22. 14. That *few are choſen* amongſt many which are *call'd*; that the *Gate which leads to Life, is ſtrait and narrow*, and that there

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are but *few who find it*, Matth. 7. 14. So that all the ſplendid Appearance of God's Mercy, when 'tis well examined, ſeems to vaniſh out of ſight, or ſhrink into a little compaſs, if compar'd with the innumerable numbers of thoſe Reprobates, *Rom.* 9. 22. who are *prepar'd* and *fitted for Deſtruction*. Is not this enough to make a Sinner tremble? A Sinner who is conſcious to himſelf of being much more guilty in the ſight of God, than many Millions of thoſe Souls who are already gone before him, and already ſuffer the eternal Flames of Hell?

Theſe Thoughts, I muſt confeſs, are Terrible. To him whoſe Eyes are open by God's Grace to ſee the malice of his Sins, and ſee Death, Judgment, and Damnation attend: Such Thoughts as theſe, to ſuch a Man, are terrible beyond expreſſion. But however, if a Man be more afraid than hurt, where is the harm of all his Fear? Are we not All oblig'd to *humble* our proud Hearts *under the powerful Hand of God*, 1 Pet. 5. 6. and *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*? Phil. 2. 12. Is not our obligation to *fear*, conſiſtent with our greater motives, greater obligations to *Hope*? 'Tis one of the moſt dangerous miſtakes that we are ſubject to. We ſeem to fancy,

fancy, that our *Fear* deſtroys our *Hope*; and that we cannot *hope* unleſs we ceaſe to *fear*. We take theſe two Affections of the Mind for mortal Enemies, becauſe their Humours are ſo oppoſite. But, as that Friendſhip is the greateſt, which no difference of Humour can divide: So, if we examine well the matter, we ſhall find, that *Fear* and *Hope* are ſuch inſeparable Friends, they cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without each other's Company; the Separation of the one, is certainly the Death and Ruin of the Other. *Fear* without Hope, degenerates into *Deſpair*. *Hope*, without Fear, is now no longer Hope, but dangerous *Preſumption*. If now and then our Minds are troubled and perplext with Fear; we muſt not therefore preſently conclude, that we have loſt our Hope: No, no; we ſhould have loſt it, if we did not fear.

If the Conſideration of God's Juſtice make a Sinner tremble, he may lawfully deſire to be deliver'd from the uneaſineſs, the pain, and the anxiety, which are the troubleſom Companions of his Fear: But as for *Fear* it ſelf, 'tis an eſſential Duty of a Chriſtian, which cannot upon any terms, admit a Diſpenſation. If the unſearchable Deſigns and Secrets

Secrets of God's Providence, are apt to fill our Souls with apprehenſions and fears; this only helps us to perform the one half of our Duty, without prejudicing the performance of the other; for the more we *fear* his *Juſtice*, ſo much more we *haſten* to the ſhelter of his *Mercy*.

This was the only Refuge which the Royal Prophet had recourſe to, *Pſal.* 77. 2. *in his days of trouble*, when *his Soul refuſed to be Comforted*, v. 9. *Has God*, ſays he, *forgotten to be gracious? Has He ſhut up, in Anger, all his tender Mercies?* v. 8. *Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his Promiſe fail for evermore?* Oh no; His Promiſe cannot fail: He can no more deceive, than be deceiv'd. He has ſign'd his Promiſe more than once in Scripture: And with a ſolemn Oath, He has deliver'd it. A *Promiſe* and an *Oath*, which, by Commiſſion from Himſelf, his Miniſters are order'd to make uſe of.

When Sinners are dejected with Temptations of Deſpair, *Ezek.* 33. 10. When their *Tranſgreſſions* and their *Sins* lye heavy upon them: When they begin to *pine away* with Fear, and melancholy Thoughts, of never being able to recover: What ſhall we ſay to comfort them?

Say to them, ſays the Prophet, *Ezek.* 33.

33. 11, 14. *If the wicked turn from his ſin*, if he repent, if he amend, *v.* 15. *and walk in the ſtatutes of Life; He ſhall ſurely live*, (and, what can be more *ſure*, ſince God himſelf is pleas'd to ſay it?) v. 15. *He ſhall ſurely live; He ſhall not die.* v. 16. *None of the ſins he has committed, ſhall be* ever *mention'd to him*; he ſhall hear of them no more; they ſhall not riſe in judgment againſt him: God himſelf has promis'd, *v.* 16. *He ſhall ſurely live; He ſhall not die.*

Say to them again; and ſay it boldly, in his Name, whoſe Juſtice makes them tremble, *Ezek.* 33. 11. *As I live, ſays the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the Death of the wicked; but that the Wicked turn from his way, and Live. Return*, ſays He, *Return from your evil ways: Why will you die? Why will you Die?* As who ſhould ſay, you *may* live, if you *will*; I always am at hand, prepar'd to help you, if you heartily repent; you know, you may recover, if you have a mind to it; you know, that if you die, it is, becauſe you *will*: *As I live, I have no pleaſure in your Death*, and therefore I have reaſon to complain, *Why* WILL *you Die?*

Dear Chriſtians, What can we wiſh for more? We know, that God *can* help us, *if* He *will*. Whether He *will* or no, we need no farther proof, than his own

Word.

Word. We have his Word: We have his Oath: He cannot take his own Great Name in vain; and, he has ſworn by his own Life, *He has no pleaſure in our Death*; He does not, of himſelf, deſire it; *but that we return, and live.* O! *we are happy! for whoſe ſake, God ſwears! But* O! *how miſerable are we; if, when God himſelf is pleas'd to ſwear, we can't believe him!*

O beatos, quorum cauſa Deus jurat! O miſeros, ſi nec juranti Domino credimus!

If Deeds are better proof than Words, let us paſs from what He has ſaid, to what He has done. What has He *done* for Sinners? Or rather, What has He *not done?* For them He came from Heaven; for them He lived a painful life on Earth; for them He died upon the Croſs, *Matth.* 9. 13. *I came not*, ſays He, *to call the Juſt, but Sinners*; He came, becauſe 'twas neceſſary he ſhould come: And therefore, for their ſakes, for whom it was moſt neceſſary, for them he principally came. He never was ſo kind to any, as to Sinners. All his Converſation was in their Company, He made it his chief buſineſs to oblige them, He followed them from place to place, He thought of nothing elſe, but how to gain their love; He came with a deſign to enflame their Hearts,

Hearts, He brought down fire from Heaven with him, and wiſh'd for nothing more, than that this fire might burn. His more than ordinary Kindneſs, was in all occaſions ſo viſibly remarkable, that He was taken notice of, and pointed at. The Phariſees were ſcandaliz'd to ſee't. And in thoſe days, it was his great Reproach, *Matth.* 11. 19. He was too much *a Friend to Publicans and Sinners*. All this while, alas! they little underſtood this Buſineſs upon Earth. His great Compaſſion of their Miſery, was the occaſion of his coming. And, ſince their Indigence firſt brought him from above, it was no wonder the Relieving of it, was his chief Employment here below. He came as a Phyſician to his dying Friends, whom He moſt dearly lov'd; and therefore took moſt care, and was the moſt concern'd, for thoſe who were moſt dangerouſly ſick. Thus did our God behave himſelf to Sinners. Thus did he love his Enemies, and treat them as his deareſt Friends. Thus did He *live* to ſerve them, till at length He *died* to ſave them.

St *Paul* concludes from hence, We now have *much more* Hope than ever. *Rom.* 5. 10. *For if when we were Enemies, we* then *were reconcil'd to God*; undoubtedly, we *now* have *much more* reaſon, *being re-*

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concil'd, to hope, *we ſhall be ſaved.* If *then*, before he ſent his only Son, God lov'd his *Enemies* ſo dearly, as to ſend him: We may well conclude, that ſince He came amongſt us, ſince He interpos'd betwixt us and his Father's Anger, ſince He died to reconcile us to Him, *Rom.* 8. 34. ſince He *roſe again*, and at the *right Hand* of his Father, is our *Advocate* in Heaven, *making interceſſion for us*; ſurely, *now* our humble Supplications, join'd with *his*, and offer'd *in his Name*, Jo. 14. 15. will for his ſake, be *much more* eaſily receiv'd. If *then* a Contrite and an Humble Heart was always ſo agreeable, He never would deſpiſe it; will he *now* refuſe it? If the Total Sum of all the horrid Crimes of Mankind, during ſeveral Ages, if the Malice of them altogether, could not any way divert the courſe of overflowing Mercy; if it could not hinder Him from ſending Jeſus to redeem the World, How can we think, the Greatneſs of our Sins can hinder him from having Mercy on us, when we heartily repent?

Let us therefore, once for all, humbly confeſs, and own our Fault. The Truth is, we are proud, and willing to excuſe our ſelves. We are willing to lay the blame of our Impenitence at our Creator's door, and ſay, He will not pardon us, He will not give us Grace,

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He will not ſave us: When, if we well examine, we ſhall find the blame is always ours; we will not repent, we will not comply with his Grace; in a word, we will not be ſaved.

All we can ſay, in our defence, is, that our Sins are *great*, God will not look upon ſuch grievous *Sinners* as we are. I cannot ſay, they are not *great*, or that we are not grievous *Sinners*: But, that *therefore* God will never look upon us, is as *falſe* as the Word of God is *true*. He hates the Sin, but loves the Sinner: He hates the Leproſie, but loves the Leper: And, as a *Merciful Father*, He *rejoices more at the Repentance of one Sinner, than the Innocence of ninety nine, who do not ſtand in need of it.*

S. Aug. Conf. lib. 8. cap. 3.

Let us therefore, once again, humbly acknowledge, and confeſs our Fault. We only *pretend* our Leproſie is ſo inveterate, God will not ſuffer us to come into his ſight, He will not cure us, He will not make us clean. The *Truth* is, we are ſo negligent, ſo ſtupid, ſo inſenſible of our condition, that tho' we now and then are terrified to ſee the Danger of it, nevertheleſs we will not make our Supplications to him as we ought, we will not be cur'd, we will not be cleanſed.

DAN-

DANGER OF DELAY.

SECT. I.

How apt we are to defer Repentance.

THAT we are, All of us, ſome time or other, betwixt this and Death, obliged under pain of Eternal Damnation, to rouze our ſleepy Souls from the bewitching Lethargy of Sin; is an important Truth, which no Man can diſpute. We all are fully ſatisfied, that if we live in the ſtate of Sin, if our Affections are criminal, if our Hearts are divided betwixt Heaven and Earth; we muſt, before we Die, *Repent* and *Mend*, or we are loſt for ever. *Luke* 13. 3. *Unleſs* we *repent*, we *ſhall All periſh*.

This

This we agree upon: Our difficulty lyes not in the *knowing*, but in the *performing* of our Duty. When we diſcourſe with our ſelves in general terms, *what it is* we ought to do; the Debate ſoon comes to an Iſſue: But, as we deſcend to the particulars of *when* and *how*; we come not ſo eaſily to a Reſolution, about the *Time*. We ſuppoſe that we are able, at our pleaſure, to change our Hearts, ſubdue our Paſſions, and reform our Lives: But our Hearts, at preſent, are otherwiſe engag'd; our Paſſions are youthful, and very importune; our way of Life, tho' none of the beſt, is ſuitable to the common Maxims of the World and what haſte, I pray, to do juſt *now*, what may be done as eaſily another time, when ever we pleaſe? Beſides, the preſent Circumſtances are very particular: An abrupt Diſengagement would now go very much againſt the hair: We had better, for a time, content our Paſſions, and bring them to a compoſition: When *this* or *that* Buſineſs is over, that we may more freely attend to the Work of our Salvation, when our Company changes, when we meet with a Conjuncture of more favourable Circumſtances: O! then we'll begin the New Man, bid adieu

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to the Follies of this World; and from that inſtant, date the beginning of our Journey towards Heaven.

Thus the Colour of Piety gives a reputation to the Deluſion: We cover the popular Cheat with an agreeable diſguiſe: And, betwixt gratifying our Inclinations on the one ſide, with a criminal condeſcendence, and pacifying the remorſes of our Conſcience, on the other ſide, with a plauſible pretence of future amendment, at a more convenient time; we make Vertue, in appearance, ſubſcribe to our Vices, and counterfeit God's Hand to one of the worſt Temptations of the Devil.

SECT. II.

How dangerous it is to defer Repentance.

'TIS clear, we are not Maſters and Diſpoſers of our Time: Only He, who has the firſt Author of Time, who now conſerves it, and who will one day put a final Period to all Time; He, I ſay, and only He, diſpoſes of it as he pleaſes.

Beſides, the Changing of our Hearts is far above our ſingle ſtrength; we are not able, by our ſelves, ſo much as to *begin* ſo great a Work, how then ſhall we be able to *perform* it, at our leiſure, when-

whenſoever we pleaſe? St *Gregory* aſſures us (and we know it well enough) *Ho.* 12. in *Ev.* that *God who promiſes to* PARDON *us, if we Repent; has never promis'd us the* TIME *of our Repentance.*

'Tis true, we cannot but confeſs, (to the great ſhame of our Ingratitude,) that our Creator loves us far above our merit. If we look back from hence as far as the firſt Creation, and carry our ſerious thoughts through all the ſteps of Providence, we meet with nothing but remarkable inſtances of his good wiſhes towards us. Nay, if we yet look farther back from the firſt moment of this World into Eternity, we find Him, before the beginning of all Time, entertaining his Thoughts with the premeditation of our welfare; and in the firſt page of his Eternal Accounts, we find the great Deſign of Man's Redemption, that ſtupendious Myſtery of Mercy and Juſtice, the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; who held nothing ſo dear, no obligation ſo important, as our Sanctification; even to the degree of laying down his Life for the advantage of that ſacred Intereſt. See here the Motives which we have, to think He loves us! Yet give me leave to tell you, He is not ſo fond of us, but that He

He can be angry at us, when He finds his Love neglected. Witneſs all thoſe miſerable Chriſtian Souls, who *once* were happy in the ſame Teſtimonies of his affection: Who thought, as we do, to reform their Lives at a convenient ſeaſon; who ſuppos'd, as we do, that God's *extraordinary* Grace would never fail to be at hand, whenever they pleas'd to have occaſion for it. Alas! poor Souls, they now are lodg'd in the flames of Hell for all Eternity; and know, too late, that tho' God never fails to beſtow his *extraordinary* Graces, where He finds a faithful correſpondency of our Endeavours with his merciful Aſſiſtance; yet He often ſhuts his Hand, if we withdraw ours. He does not *firſt* deſert us: Yet, if deſerted by us, 'tis no wonder if He treat us upon equal terms, and ſo deſert us.

Wonder not, that God who is ſo infinitely good, can find in his Heart to abandon thus a Sinner, who ſtifles the remorſes of his Conſcience, who reſiſts the frequent Inſpirations which invite him to Repentance, who has always ſomething elſe to do when he thinks of his Duty, always is ſo rude, ſo ſcornfully uncivil, in receiving all the Embaſſies of Peace, which Heaven ſends him; that every

every trifling Object, which ſalutes his Fancy, every miſerable Creature, which a ſilly Paſſion recommends to him, is ſure to have the preference, and be the firſt admitted.

How often does God court us, when we are alone, as it were carefully managing that favourable occaſion, when it may be preſum'd, we are at leiſure for his Entertainment? But, alas! we are perhaps never leſs alone, than when we are alone: The Common Enemy of Mankind, is then moſt buſy to prevent the advantage of ſuch a happy circumſtance. How often He does apply himſelf to us, when any ſudden Accident has croſs'd our Inclinations, when we have been diſappointed in our Intrigues, when we begin to find our labour loſt in the purſuit of what we hunted after, when we ſit down angry, and affronted at the confuſion of our Miſtake, almoſt ready to fall out with the World for having cheated us; then it is, that He takes hold of this conjuncture; begins in a loving manner to expoſtulate with us; to exprobate to us, how treacherous a Friend we find the World to be; on the contrary, how conſtant and faithful a Friend He has been to us, from all Eternity to this moment; how ready he is, notwithſtanding

ſtanding all that's paſt, to receive us with open Arms into favour again, if we return ſincerely to Him. And how do we hearken to all this? Why, truly, it paſſes away like a little Fit of Melancholly; we were *then* in an ill humour; we are *now* glad 'tis over; and ſo we think no more on't. Whatever God ſpeaks to our Hearts, is all out of doors: Our Hearts are ſhut againſt him, all the time, *Apoc.* 3. 20. *He ſtands at the door, and knocks*; and we neglect Him, letting Him *ſtand* and *wait* our leiſure; we approve the Friendſhip of the World before his; and tho' we may have ſome ſlight thoughts of hearing Him ſome other time, yet for the preſent, we flatly deny Him Entrance, and refuſe Him Audience.

Let us now conſider a little; What pitiful Worms we are, who thus contemn the Almighty, who He is, whom we affront; what Trifles we prefer before him; and we ſhall not wonder, if at length He leave us, and deſert us, with a Reſolution, never more to offer us theſe *extraordinary* Favours, *Jo.* 8. *v.* 21. *I go away*, ſays He, *and you ſhall ſeek me, and you ſhall Die in your Sins.*

SECT. III.

Reaſons why Delay is ſo dangerous.

THAT I may diſcover, yet more clearly, the Extravagance of Sinners, who defer the entire Converſion of their Hearts from time to time, upon a vain Preſumption of chuſing their own time, when they pleaſe; I ſuppoſe, as a fundamental Principle, 1 *Pet.* 5. *v.* 5. that *God gives Grace to the humble, and reſiſts the proud.*

He who values himſelf upon being Wiſe enough in the management of his Salvation; who neglects the time which God's great Mercy offers him; who preſumes He can, whene're he pleaſes, chuſe the time of his Converſion; ſuch a Perſon, if ever he approach the Throne of Grace, comes in a diſpoſition directly oppoſite to Reconciliation; he carries *Pride* bare-fac'd in the very Front of him; and the Addreſs he preſents, is endors'd with the very ſame Fault which he begs Pardon for.

A true Convert comes trembling, with a Heart truly *humbled* under the Omnipotent Hand of an offended Majeſty; and ſuch a Penitent will always find Favour; a Contrite and *Humble* Heart God never will deſpiſe; all his former

former Offences will paſs for nothing, *Ezek.* 33 16. *None of his ſins He committed, ſhall be mention'd to him:* In the Day of his Converſion, his Impiety ſhall never hurt him: What time ſoever God ſhall pleaſe to mark out to him, if he manage that, he is ſecure.

But, if a Sinner careleſly reject God's Inſpirations, and from time to time, neglect the opportunities He mercifully offers him; if he behave himſelf, as if he thought his time of Reconciliation were entirely at his own diſpoſing; and upon this account, when he thinks fit, preſents himſelf before the Throne of Grace; His very Coming *in this manner* is an Act of *Pride*, a Pride by which he dangerouſly preſumes upon a more than ordinary Favour, ſuch as he knows has been denied to many Thouſands, who are Damn'd for ever, for leſs Sins than his, and leſs neglect of the Almighty; a Pride, which is the greateſt provocation that can be imagined, in as much as it abuſes all his infinite Goodneſs, Longanimity, and Patience, not only to the utmoſt degree of contempt, but even to an impudent aſſurance of obtaining Mercy when we pleaſe, altho' we have ſo *much*, ſo *often*, and ſo *long*, contemned it. This is a ſufficient Rea-

ſon, why God may abandon ſuch *proud* Penitents as often as He pleaſes: And this Reaſon is attended with a ſort of Obligation (if a Man may term it ſo,) incumbent upon Providence, if not always, at leaſt generally, and for the moſt part, to treat them according to their merit.

This Obligation ariſes from two Titles. God is the *Creator* of Man, and the *Redeemer* of ſinful Man. The firſt gives Him the Prerogative of being the ſupreme and univerſal Lord and Maſter of the Univerſe; under which Character, it belongs to him, to give Law to all the parts of it, and take ſuch methods, as may, with a ſmooth and eaſie, yet ſtrong and ſteddy influence, promote and carry on the great Deſign of the Creation. Hence comes the Obligation of ſupporting the Credit, and maintaining the Authority of his Government, which ſinks immediately, and falls to nothing, if his too great Indulgence *always* tolerate the open violation of his Precepts, join'd with all the Indignities, Affronts, and Inſolencies, of a haughty Subject, that will not be reclaim'd but when he pleaſes, will not take the advantage of thoſe favourable opportunities which are ſo often offer'd him, but defers the *only neceſſary* Buſi-

Buſineſs of his Life from time to time, upon a proud preſumption, of being receiv'd at any hour whenſoe're he pleaſes. Nothing under Heaven can in this occaſion, keep up the Spirit and Vigour of Diſcipline amongſt us, and place the Fear of God before our Eyes, but a juſt and ſevere Puniſhment, ſuch as becomes the Indignation of an angry God abus'd, affronted, and contemn'd; which is, to treat us as we treat Him, leave us as He finds us, and flatly refuſe us Audience, when we make our ſupplications to him.

This Motive, which ariſes from the Title of *Creator*, is abundantly ſufficient; but yet the Title of *Redeemer*, is a far more powerful inducement to the ſame rigour of Juſtice. The Creation of the World was but a ſmall Expence: A Word *ſaid*, and the whole Work *done*. But the Redemption of ſinful Man, the Extraction of him out of the profound Abyſs of *Sin* and *Malice*, was a more laborious Maſter-piece of Mercy and Juſtice; it coſt him his deſcent from Heaven, a painful Life for many years upon Earth, and the laſt drop of his moſt precious Blood upon the Croſs. Having redeem'd us from the Devil, at ſo dear a rate, and having paid the utmoſt price of our Salvation,

He has a ſtrict Right to the Honour and Reputation of his Mercy, *Iſa.* 42. 8. He is *Lord* of All, *and his Glory He will not give to Another.* He is our Lord and Maſter; by *Redemption* All of us are His; He has paid the full Diſcharge of our Account; but He will not app'y the value of this Payment to thoſe Perſons whoſe *Pride* will either challenge the Credit, or ſhare it with him; He beſtows it only where it may be evident, if not to all the World, at leaſt to every Sinner's Conſcience who receives the benefit, that nothing but the Power of Grace could work ſo wonderful a Reſurrection, and free him from the Servitude of Sin.

He who made our Hearts, cannot but know the temper of our Inclinations. He cannot but ſee, how partial and unequal we are in our Judgments. If any thing be amiſs with us, we preſently begin to murmur and repine within our ſelves, as if God only were the Author of our Failings. But, if we ſucceed in any thing, that ſeems Praiſeworthy, either in the Sight of God or Man, we preſently aſſume the Reputation of it to our ſelves. Our Faith teaches us the contrary: And we ſeem to believe it. But yet, I know not how

it

it is, our Pride which comes into the World with us, *That Vice which is the first we fight with, and the last we conquer*, is so apt to work upon our Judgment, that if we examine well, we cannot but observe, we always are a great deal more inclin'd to magnifie our own Endeavours, than to admire the Power of Grace. If God should never treat us as we merit; if He should never abandon those, who from his Goodness take occasion to abuse it; we should grow insensible of our necessities; we should forget our Obligations to the *Grace* of our Redeemer; we should behave our selves, as if we thought that *All is done by our High Hand, and not by* the Assistance of *our Lord*, Deut. 32. 27. This is one Reason, and a just one, why He is oblig'd (as I may say) in honour, if not always, at least generally, and for the most part, to refuse them Audience in a Time of their own chusing, who during the time which He thought proper for their purpose, never would vouchsafe to hearken to Him, *Jo.* 8. *v.* 21. *I go away*, says he, *and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your Sins.* *S. Bern. de ord. vit. & mor. instit.*

SECT. IV.

That we ought to begin immediately, without Delay.

S. Greg. Hom. 12. in Evang. HE *who has promis'd* PARDON *to those who Repent, has never promis'd* TRUE REPENTANCE *to those who defer it.* A Man must be a Stranger to the ordinary course of Providence, who does not know, that there are certain Times in which our God is kinder and more favourable to us; when Clouds of Anger disappear, when Heaven seems to smile upon us, and the Almighty seems to meet half way the Prayers and Addresses of his People. 'Tis not that God is liable to any shadow of Inconstancy: He always is enclin'd to Mercy, and nothing but our Sins can force him to the Rigour of his Justice. Sometimes He showers down his Graces in plentiful abundance; visits and inspires us with good *Thoughts*, good *Inclinations* to amend our lives; strongly and sweetly moves us; frequently and importunely presses and solicites us to true Repentance. But, if we slight his Favours, He withdraws them from us: Mercy neglected and abus'd, gives place to Justice: And all those *great* and *extraordinary*

traordinary Graces, which before abounded, are denied us; that we may, by this means, grow ſenſible of their Neceſſity and our Dependency, their Power and our Weakneſs.

" What Wiſe Man is there in the World, " who reading This, will not fear the *deferring* of his Converſion, tho' it were but for one day? Who knows, whether this ſhall be the *laſt* day, or no, that ever God will call him? *Prov. ch.* 1. God ſays, *I call'd, and you refuſed to come; I held out my Hand, and you would not look towards me; and therefore I will* FORSAKE *you in your Extremity.* He does not ſay, how many times He *called*, or how long He *held out his Hand.* God ſays, " *I ſtand at the door, and knock:* But He ſays not, how often. Almighty God is ready and bountiful to *knock* and *call*; but yet, he binds himſelf to no *time* or *ſpace*, but comes and goes at his pleaſure. And they who take not their times when they are offer'd, are excuſeleſs before his Juſtice, and do not know, whether ever it ſhall be offer'd them again, or no: For that this

Chriſt. Directory, p. 2. *c.* 7. *Sect.* 3. *& n.* 35.

Ibid. n. 37. *A. D.* 1673.

" thing is only in the Will and Know-
" ledge of God alone; who takes Mer-
" cy where it pleaſes him beſt, and is
" bound to none. And when the pre-
" fix'd time of calling is once paſt, wo
" be to that party; for a thouſand Worlds
" [perhaps] will not purchaſe it again.

This Reaſon is abundantly ſufficient, to make us manage carefully the *work* of *our Salvation with fear* and *trembling*; and *humble our ſelves under the powerful Hand of God*, Phil. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 6. without pretending to any *abſolute* Security of our admittance whenſoe're we pleaſe. We are certainly Damn'd, if we never ask Pardon; probably it may be yet time enough, if we ask it now: And in concurrence of a *certain* ruin on the one ſide, with a *probability* of a ſafety on the other, no Wiſe Man will loſe time to deliberate upon the Choice.

Some will ſay, perhaps, 'Tis a ſevere Caſe, to renounce all Worldly Affections, and deny them what's moſt dear to them; to declare War againſt the moſt violent of Paſſions, and to undergo the hardſhip of perpetual Service in the Engagement; if we have no *abſolute* Security of making Peace when ever we deſire it. Had we an aſſurance of our Pardon, whenſoe're we ask it, it were

ſome

ſome encouragement to undertake a thorough Reformation of our Lives. But, to renounce All, upon a hazard of gaining Nothing, is too cold an invitation to encounter ſo painful and laborious a Task.

O Man, ſays St. *Paul* to the *Romans*, Ch. 9. 20. *Who art Thou, that* thus *repliest againſt God?* Who are you, that dare preſume to article with Him, in this manner? Is it not enough, to have ſo frequently tranſgreſt his Laws, ſo much contemn'd his Menaces, ſo long abus'd his Patience? Is it not enough to have idoliz'd the Objects of your Paſſion? To have ſet up your ſingle ſelf in oppoſition to all the Dictates of Duty and Obedience? to have affronted the Omnipotent Hand, which (had not his Mercy held it,) had long ſince ſunk your miſerable Soul to the Abyſs of Hell? Is not this enough, unleſs the ſame Pride, which began your Miſery, accompany alſo the Petition of your Pardon? Remember, that *God reſiſts the proud, and gives grace* only *to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Remember, that he is a very *proud* Beggar, who will not ask an Alms, except he be aſſur'd before-hand of receiving it: And, that God is ſo far from receiving that inſolent Requeſt of ſuch a proud Peti-

Petitioner, that (on the contrary,) He openly declares, he *hates* him, *Eccl.* 25. 4. *My Soul*, says He, *hates a proud Beggar.*

Ah Christians! we must (if we hope for Salvation,) we must come in another Disposition. We must not lose time upon the Debate, whether or no we have a certain prospect of Success, *Phil.* 2. 12. We must *work our Salvation with fear and trembling*, 1 Pet. 5. 6. and *humble our selves under the powerful hand of God.* In this Conjuncture, we have nothing else to do, but flye in all haste to the *Throne of Grace*, *Heb.* 4. 16. Every Moment is precious: Every Moment of Delay encreases the Danger.

The Prodigal Son, whose imitation our Saviour recommends to us, proposing him as a great Example of an humble Penitent, did not lose time in studying, whether his Father would receive him or not; he did not beforehand enquire into his Father's Humour, how he stood affected to him; whether he were ready to admit him; or determin'd never more to look upon him; But, immediately, at his first *coming to himself*, he said, *Luke* 15. 17, 18. *I will rise, and go to my Father, and say to him, Father, I have Sin'd.* So far was he from any *absolute* assurance of his Pardon, and

so

ſo ſenſible of his unworthineſs; he did not ſo much as offer to demand a perfect Reconciliation, but left himſelf entirely to his Father, to diſpoſe of him, and do with him what he pleaſed, *v.* 19. *Father I am not worthy to be call'd your Son.*

Alas! What can we do in this condition? We muſt redouble our Prayers which we have heretofore ſo often huddled over, with as much indifference and coldneſs, as if we were *afraid* leſt God ſhould *hear* us, and *aſſiſt* us with his Grace to *take up our Croſs, deny our ſelves, and follow him*, Matth. 16. 24.

If after a month, a year, or more, we find no great effect of Mercy, we muſt ſtill perſevere firm in our Endeavours: The more we *fear* God's Anger, the faſter we muſt *fly* to the protection of his Goodneſs. We muſt not ſink under the apprehenſions of our Reprobation, but without diſputing our Deſtiny, we muſt reſolve, either to obtain Pardon, or die in the demanding of it.

If the Almighty ſeem to take no notice of us; if He ſeem as it were, to command us out of his ſight, we have nothing elſe to ſay, *Jo. 6. v. 68.* but, *Lord, whither ſhall we go?* What way is there to fly from thine Anger, but by the ſpeedieſt recourſe we poſſible can

make

make to the ſhelter of thy infinite Goodneſs? We know, we deſerve an Eternal Baniſhment from thy Preſence: We know, we often have refus'd Thee Audience: We know, it was our common Anſwer, *Prov.* 3. 28. *Go, and Come again* another time: And therefore, we know we have no reaſon to complain, if now we are forſaken and abandon'd by Thee. But, this is only what we deſerve; 'tis only what we juſtly *Fear*: Thou nevertheleſs, commandeſt us to *Hope* otherwiſe; and 'tis in compliance with this Command, *Rom.* 4. 18. that we *Hope even againſt Hope.* We come not to diſpute about our Heaven or our Hell; we come not to capitulate upon the Articles of our Salvation; we only *fear* as we have reaſon, and *hope* as we ought; ſo that, ſetting aſide the whole ſollicitude of that Affair, we leave it entirely to thy Mercy. We come with a Contrite and and Humble Heart, full of nothing but a ſincere Sorrow for all our paſt Offences, joined with a hearty Reſolution, never to offend thee any more: Except it may be an Offence for Sinners, ſuch as we are, to continue in thy Preſence; which cannot be: No, no; tho' we ſhould ſee thy Sword of Juſtice drawn againſt us, and thy Omnipotent Hand

ſtretch'd

ſtretch'd out to ſtrike us dead at thy Feet, we will not quit the place, *Job* 13. 15. *Although thou killeſt us, we will* ſtill *truſt in Thee.*

This is the Humble Heart, which charms our God; the Heart which He cannot refuſe, *Pſ.* 50. Such *a Contrite, ſuch an Humble Heart, He never will deſpiſe.* This is the only diſpoſition that can make amends for the abuſe of ſo much Goodneſs; and for the deferring our Converſion ſo long, upon a proud *Preſumption* of Amendment when we pleas'd. Such an Humble Heart, as this, gives God no reaſon to be jealous of his Honour: His Hand appears manifeſtly in the management and *preparation* of it, *Exod.* 8. 19. *The Finger of God is here.* Such a Convert, as this, will never challenge any ſhare in the Honour of his Converſion; but, admiring the Benefit, will reſign the Honour, and humble himſelf ſo much the more in his preſence who made him what he is. But God *will* always have the *Honour* of the work; He *will* be Merciful when He thinks fit, and not allow proud Man to diſpoſe of his Mercy; He *will* take his own time, and confound the preſumptuous *Pride* of thoſe, who (as if they were God's Maſter, rather than his Servants,) make no doubt,

doubt, but they can chuſe a *Time* convenient, when they pleaſe.

Sinners, Deceive not your ſelves. Think not that God is always equally diſpos'd to hear us, whenſoever we appoint our time of Audience. He will not ſuffer us to pretend to the honour of beginning our Converſion, and challenging his Greateſt Graces, at our leiſure. 'Tis true; He died to ſave us: But, though He died for our *Benefit*, He died for God's *Honour*; and will not part with any ſhare of this Honour, to humour a *proud* Penitent, *Iſa.* 42. 8. He is *Lord* of All, *and his Glory He will not give to another*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. He *Reſiſts the Proud, and* only *to the Humble he gives Grace* in this World, *Glory* in the next.

A CONTRITE HEART.

SECT. I.

Sorrow for our Sins.

Anton. das Chagas. "O My God! God of my Soul, my Life, my Heart,

" Heart, and All that is within me! I " have ſinned, O my God; I have offend- " ed Thee; I have done ill before the " Face of Heaven and Earth. Neither " the Stars of Heaven, nor the grains of " Sand upon the Earth, are equal to the " boundleſs number of my grievous ſins.

Ah my dear God! my *Maker*, my *Preſerver*, my *Redeemer*, and my *Only Benefactor*, how it grieves me to have ſo offended Thee! " I am " much more troubled at my " great Ingratitude, than at the great- " neſs of the Torments I deſerve. *Ibid.*

O that I could bewail with Tears of Blood, the baſe unworthineſs of my Behaviour to my *only* moſt Obliging, moſt Endearing, moſt Deſerving *Friend!* A *Friend* who *always* lov'd me, even when I lov'd my ſilly *Humours*, and his miſerable *Creatures* more than *Him*, who always *lov'd* me, even when I was his moſt *Ungrateful Enemy*; and notwithſtanding All, ſtill *Made* me whatſoe're *I was*, ſtill *Gave* me whatſoe're *I Had*, and ſtill *Invited* me, nay, even *Courted* me, with daily Inſpirations of his Grace, to *Love* Him above All Things. O that my Eyes were living Fountains of continual Repentance, to bewail my baſe Unworthineſs!

And yet, altho' my bleeding Heart ſhould

ſhould burſt out at my Eyes, my *Grief* would ne're be equal to my Grievous *Sins*; the *Guilt* of which is *infinite*, and infinitely greater than I'm able to conceive. Tho' I ſhould weep with Tears of Blood in every corner of the Earth where I have ſinn'd; All that would never waſh away the *Guilt* or *Scandal* of my Crimes. There's nothing but the bleeding Sacrifice of the *Unſpotted Lamb of God*; there's nothing but the Blood of JESUS dying for my ſake upon the Croſs; there's nothing elſe can reconcile me to the Sovereign Majeſty which I have *ſo* provok'd; there's nothing elſe can waſh out the deep Stains of my unſpeakable Ingratitude.

This is that *Mercy* of my God, which the admiring World has reaſon to call *Great*: That *Mercy* which is truly *Great*, not only in it's ſelf, but *Great* to all that are Partakers of it. *Pſal.* 50. *Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy* Great *Mercy. Waſh* my poor Soul *from its Iniquity, and Cleanſe it from its Sins. Sprinkle me* only with the Blood of JESUS, *and I ſhall be Cleans'd: Waſh me* with it, *and I ſhall be whiter than Snow. Caſt me not away from Thy Face*, but look upon *a Contrite and an Humble Heart*, which (for the ſake of Thy *Beloved Son, with whom Thou art well*

well pleaſed, Matth. 17. 5.) I hope, *Thou wilt not deſpiſe*; but, that Thou wilt *have Mercy on me, O God, according to Thy* Great *Mercy.*

SECT. II.

Reſolutions of Amendment.

I *have ſaid: Now I Begin*, Pſal. 76. Alas! How often *have I ſaid* So, and as often broke my Word! And, what Hope have I *Now* to keep it, more than any other Time? When I renew the doleful Memory of my Relapſes, how I tremble at the very Thought! To think how often, in a lukewarm Fit of Piety, I have *imagin'd*, I was *Now* beginning to *amend* my Life; and yet, how *Soon*, how *Eaſily*, how *Shamefully*, hath every *ſudden* Paſſion, every *ſinful* Inclination, every *ſilly* Humor overcome my beſt and firmeſt Reſolutions! Proud, as I was, I *wondered*, always at my *weakneſs*, and could ſcarce *believe* it, though I *Saw* it. Proud as I was, ſtill went on in the ſame road; Still *fancy'd* it was *eaſy* to *Reform*, when *I Reſolv'd* upon't; and ſtill excus'd my ſelf, by laying all the fault upon my *Neighbours*, my *Employments*, or ſome other *Circumſtances* of my Life. And yet, what *Place* ſoever I have liv'd in, whatſoever *Buſi-*

neſs

neſs I have been employed in, whatſoever *Circumſtances* have attended me, thro' all the ſeveral Changes of my Fortune; I have *always* been the ſame *Frail Creature*, always unequally unfaithful to my Word. What *Hope* then have *I Now* to keep it, more than any other Time?

Muſt *I Deſpair?* Yes, yes: 'Tis abſolutely *Neceſſary* for me to *Deſpair* of my *own* Strength, that I may ſeriouſly *begin* to *Hope* in nothing elſe but *Him*, who *gives Grace to the Humble, and reſiſts the Proud*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. And may I by his Grace *perſevere* all my Life, *improving* each day more and more, *in This Deſpair*, which is the Reaſon why, *I Hope* more *now* than any other Time.

O that I had long ſince *Deſpair'd* entirely of my *own* ſufficiency, and plac'd my *Confidence* in nothing but the powerful aſſiſtance of his *Grace*; I ſhould not then have been ſo *Negligent*, ſo *openly Expos'd* on every ſide, to the continual ſurprizes of my *Paſſions*. I ſhould then have carefully *employed* the precious moments of my *Time*, either in *Studying* how to *Meet* my ſeveral *Dangers*, or *Forecaſting* how to *Avoid* Them. I ſhou'd then have *Pray-ed* as heartily, as Men do in a Storm; who every moment fear to ſink, and every moment lift their trembling Hands,

and

and weeping Eyes to Heaven; the ſame *angry Heaven*, whence They juſtly apprehend their fatal Ruin. Ah my God! how ſeldom have *I Prayed* ſo! And how often have *I Aſk'd* Thy Grace, *as Careleſsly* as if *I had no need* of it!

My *Reſolutions*, like my Prayers, hitherto have only been in *General Terms*: That *now I would Reform my Life; I would no longer be a Slave to Paſſion and Humour; I would* now *Begin to be a Saint; And, O! how I have been aſham'd to Think of all my Follies!* Alas! *This* very *Pride* which made me thus *Aſham'd*, was That which made me *Fancy*, 'twas an *Eaſy* matter to *Amend*; and therefore made me *Careleſs* in obſerving the *particular Occaſions* of my Greateſt Sins, the *Remedies* which ought to be *apply'd*, and the *Impediments* which ought to be *remov'd*. But ſince the ſad experience of my Weakneſs makes me wiſer, I am *now reſolv'd*, it ſhall be the *chief Buſineſs* of my Life, to *watch* and *ſtudy* all the *Motions* of my *Heart*: What *Paſſions* are predominant; what *Inclinations* Second them; by what *Approaches* They gain ground; and by what *Means*, in This or That *particular* Occurrence, They may be reſiſted, weakened, and ſubdued.

A Maſter Work-man needs but now and

and then apply his Rule, because his *Habit* guides his skilful *Hand*. But I, Unskilful as I am, who only *now Begin* the necessary Art of Living well, and have so many years contracted an ill habit of neglecting all those Holy Precepts; I must *now*, not only in my *Morning-Recollection*, carefully *Foresee* each Danger I am like to meet with in the *Day*; but *frequently Renew* those pious Resolutions; in *All* occasions *Consult* the Eternal *Truth* which came from Heaven to instruct me; and *Examine* seriously, if the *Employment* of my Thoughts, Words, Actions, and Desires, be *suitable* to so Divine a *Rule*.

All This I am *Resolv'd upon*, in Presence of my God, and the whole Court of Heaven. Help me, All ye Blessed Spirits, *Luke* 15. 7. who are *joyful* Witnesses of these my Holy Resolutions; assist me *now* to make an humble Offering of them All, *before the Throne of Grace*, Heb. 4. 16. And join your better Prayers with mine, to beg a *Blessing* for them; without *which*, altho' I daily *water* Them with penitential Tears, they never will *Encrease*, and bring forth Fruit. *I have said: Now I Begin*. Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy *Great* Mercy, *Psal.* 76. 11. For *Such a Change comes only from the Right Hand of the Highest.*

A N

AN HUMBLE HEART.

SECT. I.

The Neceſſity and Advantages of Humility.

'ALL our Saviour's Life, and Converſation upon Earth, was a continual Inſtruction for the modelling of ours. But above all things, He particularly recommended to us the Example of his great Humility: *Learn of me*, ſays he, *becauſe I am humble of Heart, and you will find reſt for your Souls*, Mat. 11. 29. *S. Aug. lib. de ver. rel.*

'The neceſſity of this incomparable Vertue is ſo great, that 'tis impoſſible, without it, to make any progreſs into a Spiritual Life. Our Pride corrupts and ruins all our Vertuous Actions, unleſs Humility begin, continue, and conclude them. *Rodriguez. Par. 2. Tr. 3. ch. 1.*

'St.

'St. *Gregory* ſays, True Ver-
Rodri-guez. 'tue never grows in any Soul,
ch. 2. 'but when 'tis nouriſh'd by
'its proper *Root*, which is Hu-
'mility. This plain compa-
'riſon expreſſes very well its Nature,
'and its Properties. 1. A Flower fades
'and withers when 'tis parted from its
'Root. 2. The Root is never better than
'when hidden in the Earth, and tram-
'pled under foot. 3 A Tree is longer
'liv'd, and yields more Fruit, accord-
'ing as the Root of it is deeper, and
'lies lower under ground.

'How much our Faith de-
Rodr. 'pends upon Humility, the A-
ch. 3. 'poſtle tells us, when he ſpeaks
'of *caſting down Imaginations*,
'2 Cor. 10 5. *every high thing that exhalts*
'*its ſelf againſt the knowledge of God*; and
'*captivating every Thought to th Obedience*
'*of Chriſt.* Man's Reaſon is but weak,
'and ſubject to miſtake; and therefore
'a ſubmiſſive Spirit is required; the
'want of which, has been the firſt be-
'ginning of all Hereſies, and verified
'St. *Paul's* Prediction, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 7.
'That *in the laſt days, dangerous Times*
'*will come, becauſe Men will be Proud; de-*
'*ſpiſers of good People; and ever learning,*
'*but never coming to the knowledge of Truth.*

The

'The ſame Humility which guides
'our Faith, encourages our
'*Hope*: Becauſe the more *Rodr.* 5.
'we fear our Weakneſs, and 10. 11.
'diffide in our own Strength,
'the more we have recourſe to God, in
'whom we place our confidence: And
'thus, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *when we are weak*,
'ſays the Apoſtle, *we are ſtrong*. That is
'to ſay, when once we rightly under-
'ſtand our ſelves, and being thoroughly
'convinced of our Infirmity, we ſerioul-
'ly begin to hope in nothing but the
'aſſiſtance of God's Grace: Then 'tis
'that he himſelf begins to take in hand
'the management of our Affairs; pro-
'vides for us in all our ſpiritual Wants;
'ſupports, and guides us, by a ſpecial
'Providence, in all our pious Under-
'takings. 'Tis with us, as 'tis with Beg-
'gars, who expoſe their Ulcers and their
'Miſeries; the more they lay them o-
'pen in the publick View, the more
'they move our Pity, and obtain more
'Alms of Charitable Perſons: So the
'more ſincerely we confeſs, and with
'profound Humility acknowledge, our
'extream Neceſſities, expoſing them in
'preſence of our God, the more we move
'him to compaſſionate our miſerable
'State, and to beſtow upon us more a-

'bundantly the Riches of his Grace.

Humility, as it encourages our Hope, ſo it improves our Charity. An humble Man perpetually conſidering his innumerable Faults and Imperfections, the more he ſees his great unworthineſs, the more he wonders at God's Patience, and is more inclin'd to love his Goodneſs above all things. 'Nothing 'makes me better under-'ſtand how good God is, 'than when I ſee with how 'much Patience he endures 'a Man, who is not able to endure him-'ſelf. 'Tis he who is offended; I am 'the Offender. I, all Wickedneſs; and 'he, all Holineſs. As wicked as I am, 'I can't endure my ſelf: As holy as he 'is, he ſuffers me with patience. I only 'ſee a ſmall part of my Faults, and hate 'my ſelf: He ſees them all, and yet he 'does not ceaſe to love me. I have ſuch 'a horrour of my ſelf, when I conſider 'how inconſtant, and how frail I am; 'and yet, I cannot perceive that God has 'any horrour of me. On the contrary, 'the more I humbly own my wicked-'neſs, the more obliging and endearing 'proofs he gives me of inſuperable good-'neſs.

P. Craſſet. T. 2. Con. 14.

'Our

'Our Humility preſerves
'and guards our Chaſtity. *Rodr. ch.* 3.
'St. *Bernard* does not fear to
'ſay, that *even the Purity of the Bleſſed*
'*Virgin her ſelf, had never been agreeable to*
'*God, without it.* Beſides, it
'is not only neceſſary to pre- *Corn. a*
'ſerve our Chaſtity; but is *Lap. in c.*
'the beſt and moſt effectual 1. *ad Rom.*
'Remedy that can be, to pro-
'cure it. Luxury is the puniſhment of
'Pride, and Chaſtity the Triumph of
'Humility. St. *Hierom* ſays, *'Tis hard to*
'*find a Heretick that loves Chaſtity; altho'*
'*in his Diſcourſes he may ſeem to praiſe it,*
'*and pretend to practiſe it.* The reaſon is,
'becauſe God gives grace only to the
'humble, and reſiſts the Proud, 1 *Pet.* 5.
'5. and where there is no Grace, there
'is no Chaſtity, but all Concupiſcence.
'Hence comes the common Saying of
'our Novelleſts, that Chaſtity is impoſ-
'ſible; and 'tis no wonder that they
'think ſo; for it is ſo, to the Proud, and
'Graceleſs, who can ne're be truly
'Chaſte, till they are truly Humble.
'They are *given up by God to* all *uncleanneſs*
'*through the Luſt of their own Hearts*, Rom.
'1. 24. and 'tis but juſt, that if the Soul
'refuſes due ſubmiſſion to God, the Bo-
'dy ſhould be found, by his permiſſion,

'as untractable and disobedient to such 'a Soul. Because, says St. *Gregory*, *By 'Pride they prefer themselves before Men; 'by Luxury they soon become like Beasts.*

'A Man might easily go *Rodr. ch.* 3. 'thro' all other Vertues, and 'observe Humility as neces- 'sary for the acquiring and preserving of 'them all. But, what has been already 'said, suffices to convince us, that the 'most compendious method of aspiring 'to Perfection, is to make it our chief 'business to be *truly humble.*

'Tis enough to add, that *P. Crasset T.* 1. *Lund.* 3. *de l' Avent.* 'all our Vertues and good 'Actions, without Humili- 'ty, will never save us; and 'that all our Sins and Im- 'perfections, with true Hu- 'mility, will never damn us; for as soon 'as ever we are truly humble, all our 'Vices leave us, and immediately all 'Vertues take possession of our Heart. 'My Soul! why are we then discoura- 'ged? Why do we despair? Why are 'we now and then so melancholly, when 'we think of all our Imperfections and 'Faults? If therefore we have reason to 'despair, have we not therefore reason 'to be humble? Let us be so then, and 'we shall have no longer any reason to 'despair.

'deſpair. Let us but humble our ſelves 'in preſence of our God, we ſhall ſoon 'obtain all that we have not; we ſhall 'be able to do all that we cannot; and 'we ſhall receive all that we deſerve not. 'You cannot faſt: At leaſt you can 'humble your ſelf. You cannot weep 'for your Sins? Humble your ſelf, be-'cauſe you cannot. You have not time 'enough, nor Health enough, to ſay 'much Prayers. However, you may be 'as humble every jot, as if you had. 'Do 'what you can, you always pray with 'much Diſtraction. Be content, and 'humble. You are now and then ſur-'priz'd, and fall into ſome Sin. Have 'patience: Take more care another 'time, and be more humble ever after.

An Humble Heart God never will deſpiſe, Pſal. 50. And is not This enough, to ſhew us the *Neceſſity* and great *Advantage* of Humility? How comfortable is the Thought of it, to them whoſe want of Health, or other Circumſtances, will not ſuffer to make uſe of Corporal Auſterities, in Satisfaction for their Sins! What Comfort is it to them, to reflect, that ſtill they have a Refuge left them in the Sanctuary of this Vertue. 'Tis the *only One* they have, if we believe an Ancient Father of the Church. *Whoever has committed*

mitted grievous Sins, and has a Body weak and sickly; let him tread the footsteps of Humility: In all things, let him follow where the Spirit and the impulse of that Vertue lead him: 'Tis the only way he has to save his Soul.

St. John. Clima. Recapitul. Ar. 35.

SECT. II.

First Degree of Humility.

'THE first Degree, is to *Rod. ch. 5.* 'have a mean *Opinion* 'of our selves, to *think* our 'selves contemptible, and *judge*, that we 'deserve to be despis'd by all the World. 'The Knowledge of our selves, our 'Weakness, and our Misery, is no Hu'mility; but only is the necessary 'Means to come to this Degree of it.

'A Person truly humble, *Rod. ch 3.* 'always has before his eyes 'his *own* Defects and Imper'fections; in others, he considers chiefly 'the Perfections and Vertues which he 'finds; and thus he always is persua'ded, that his Neighbours are much bet'ter and more perfect than himself. He 'loves them with respect and tender'ness. He is not angry at his being va'lued less than they, but glad to see them '*All* preferr'd before him.

'His

'His Sins, which *ever are before him*, make him sensible, that he deserves the worst of Punishments: And therefore, whatsoever happens to him, he esteems it infinitely less than his Iniquity deserves. He never thinks himself affronted. Whatsoever wrong is done him, he receives it as a favour, in comparison of what he has just reason to expect. He suffers all, in silence, upon this account: And far from breaking out into Complaints, he only calls to mind that humble Saying of the Prophet *Micah*, 7. 9. *I will bear the Indignation of my God, because I have sinn'd against him.* *Ib. Ps.* 50.

'The hardest measure we can suffer in this Life; the greatest and the most severe Humiliations we can think of, are incomparably less than what is due to any single Crime, which we commit against the Majesty of God. Can we imagine, all the World is able to dishonour him *too much*, who has dishonour'd God himself? And is't not just, that having slighted and neglected his Creator, he himself should be despis'd by *All*, and live for ever after in disgrace? Remember, that a Sinner is a *Child of* *Rod. ch.* 7.

'*Wrath*, Ephes. 2. 3. an Enemy of God, a 'Monster of Deformity, condemn'd to 'everlasting Flames: Remember this; 'and you will shrink below the feet of 'all the World; because you will be 'then convinc'd, that howsoever you 'are humbled and oppress'd, a Man 'who has but once offended God, de-'serves to suffer more.

'Altho' my Conscience 'accuse me not, *Though I* '*know nothing of my self*, says 'the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 4. 4. *yet I am not* '*hereby justified; but he that judges me, is* '*God.* When we consider well, how 'doubtful our Condition is, and how 'we always are uncertain of our being 'justified: This, this alone, without all 'other motives, which are numberless, 'is of it self abundantly sufficient to 'humble us. What Christian is there, 'that would dare to shew his face? Or 'Man that would not rather wish to 'sink into the Bowels of the Earth, to 'hide himself? If this Reflection once 'had made a deep impression in his 'Mind, *My Crimes are certain, but my Par-*'*den is uncertain*; nothing can be more 'uneasie to a Soul that would be sav'd, 'than this Uncertainty. But yet, there's 'nothing in the World of greater use for

Rodr. Ibid.

'the

'the acquiring and preſerving of Hu-
'mility. There's nothing can refrain
'us more from *Cenſuring* our Neighbours,
'or *Deſpiſing* even thoſe who ſeem the
'greateſt Sinners, than to think, that We
'our ſelves are far from having any cer-
'tainty of being in the State of Grace;
'and that this very moment we may be,
'for ought we know, in equal danger
'of the everlaſting Flames of Hell.

SECT. III.

Second Degree of Humility.

'THE Second Degree, is
'when we *love* to be *Rod.ch.*13.
'neglected, and *deſire* to be
'deſpis'd. As hard as it appears, if we
'were once well grounded in the firſt
'Degree, the way would then be ſhort
'and eaſie to the ſecond. If we had but
'once a mean *Opinion* of our ſelves; if
'once we truly *thought* our ſelves con-
'temptible; if once our *judgment* were
'convinc'd, that we deſerve to be de-
'ſpis'd by All the World; it would
'not then be difficult to *ſuffer* their con-
'tempt: We then ſhould even *wiſh* for
'ſuch occaſions of improving our Hu-
'mility: They would be always very
'welcom to us, and afford us, every day,
'new Joy and Conſolation. 'Tis certain,

'ſays St. *Benaventure, that we naturally* 'love *to ſee our Sentiments approv'd, and our* 'Opinions follow'd. *Which if it be true, as* 'our Experience too often teaches us, why are 'we ſo uneaſie, when we ſee our Neighbours un-'dervalue us? 'Tis queſtionleſs, becauſe we 'are not, in our judgment, thoroughly con-'vinc'd, that we deſerve to be deſpis'd; for 'if we were, we ſhould be glad to ſee our 'Neighbours follow our Opinion.

'The Diſpoſitions which
Rod. ch. 14. 'make way to this Degree, 'are, 1. To ſhun as much as 'may be, all occaſions of Praiſe. 2. To 'ſuffer patiently the Humours and In-'ſults of others. 3. To take no pleaſure 'in our being celebrated and admir'd.

'1. The avoiding all occa-
Ibid. 'ſions of Praiſe, is recom-'mended to us by the great 'Example of our Saviour, and the uni-'verſal Practice of the Saints. Our Sa-'viour fled from thoſe who thought to 'chuſe him King. He ſhew'd his Glo-'ry on Mount *Thabor*, to no more than 'three of his Diſciples, and immedi-'ately charg'd them not to ſay a word 'on't. Whenſoever his great Charity 'appear'd in doing Miracles, his great 'Humility appear'd no leſs in his com-'manding Secrecy.

'Humility

'Humility affects not to
'appear in her own likeneſs. *S. Fr. Sales.*
'She forbears Expreſſions *p.* 3. *c.* 5.
'which diſcover her. She
'deſires, not only to conceal all other
'Vertues, but particularly, to conceal
'her ſelf.

'Tis a dangerous thing to
'ſpeak of ones ſelf, either *P. Craſſet.*
'well or ill; if *well*, 'tis to *T.* 1. *Mar.*
'appear *deſerving*; if *ill*, 'tis 3. *de l'Advent.*
'appear *humble*.

'An humble Man had ra-
'ther hear another ſay, *That* *S. Fr. Sales,*
'*he is miſerable, inconſiderable,* *p.* 3. *c.* 5.
'*good for nothing*, than be
'heard to ſay it of himſelf. At leaſt, he
'never contradicts it. Whoſoever ſays
'it, he *believes* it firmly, and is there-
'fore *glad* that others are of his Opinion.

'2. If we ſeriouſly con-
'ſider'd, that the eſteem of *Rod. ch.* 14.
'Men, is *generally*, if not *al-*
'*ways*, an Occaſion of Preſumption and
'Pride; and that the Saints themſelves,
'who by God's Grace, were more ſe-
'cure from Danger, always fled from
'ſuch Temptation, even with averſion
'and horrour; we ſhould certainly con-
'clude, that whatſoever may contribute
'to the humbling of us, and inducing

'us

'us to have a mean opinion of our 'ſelves, ſhould be receiv'd with *patience*, 'and embrac'd as uſeful means of pur-'chaſing, preſerving, and encreaſing our 'Humility. The opportunities of pra-'ctiſing this Vertue, are ſo frequent 'every day, that if we did but carefully 'forecaſt to profit by them, we might 'almoſt make it our continual Exercise.

'It happens, ſays the De-
B. III. ch. 49. 'vout *Kempis*, *that what*
'*is pleaſing to others, ſhall go*
'*well forward; that which thou wiſheſt, ſhall*
'*not ſpeed; that which others ſay, ſhall be*
'*heard; what thou ſayeſt, ſhall be nothing*
'*regarded; others ſhall ask, and ſhall re-*
'*ceive; thou ſhalt ask, and not obtain;*
'*others ſhall be great in the praiſe of Men;*
'*but of thee there ſhall be no Speech: To o-*
'*thers, this or that ſhall be committed; but*
'*thou ſhalt be accounted fit for nothing. At*
'*this, Nature is apt ſometimes to be troubled;*
'*and 'tis much, if thou art humble enough,*
'*to bear it* patiently *with ſilence.*

'3. To be charm'd ſo little
Ibid. 'with Eſteem and Honour, as
'to *take no pleaſure* in them, is
'a third ſtep to the height of this De-'gree; much harder than the other two. 'For as St. *Auſtin* very well obſerves, '*Altho' it may be eaſie for a Man to live*

with-

'*without praiſe, when it is denied; is hard*
'*enough for any Man, to take no pleaſure in it,*
'*when 'tis freely offer'd him.*' *A Proud Man,*
'ſays St. *Gregory*, '*rejoices even when he*
'*knows that his Admirers are miſtaken in*
'*him. For he cares not what his Life is in*
'*the ſight of God, but only values the appea-*
'*rance of it in the ſight of Men. And there-*
'*fore he is puft up with the leaſt applauſe:*
'*He fancies, he has reapt the fruit of his en-*
'*deavours: He deſires no more: He aims at*
'*nothing elſe.* But, on the contrary, an
'humble Man is ſo averſe from the ap-
'plauſe of Men, that he's uneaſie with
'it. He's afraid, there is no real ground
'for it; or elſe he fears the loſs of his
'Reward in Heaven, by receiving of it
'here, and trembles at the apprehenſion
'of exchanging, for a little popular E-
'ſteem, the Crown of everlaſting Glo-
'ry, which he hopes for. *Solomon* ſays,
'*Prov.* 27. 21. *As Gold is tried by the Fur-*
'*nace, ſo is a Man by his Praiſe.* St. *Grego-*
'*ry* adds, *If he grows vain by hearing it, he's*
'*like falſe Gold, which ſuffers by the fire;*
'*but, if the hearing of it makes him trem-*
'*ble, leſt it may be prejudicial to his Soul*
'*before the Sovereign Judge; 'tis like a fire*
'*which only ſerves to purify, and give him*
'*a new luſtre.* We ſhould be ſo ground-
'ed in the knowledge of our ſelves, that

'when

'when we are commended, we may al-
'ways have before our eyes our baſe
'Unworthineſs; and be ſo much the
'more aſham'd, to think, we are ſo far
'from being what we *ſeem* to be; that
'we fall ſhort of being, even what we
'*ſhould* be.

'By theſe three Steps we
Rod. ch. 15. 'come at laſt to the Degree,
'of *loving* and *deſiring* to be
'undervalued and deſpis'd: We be-
'come, not only humble in our *Judg-*
'*ment*, but our *Heart*. The firſt degree,
'which is Humility of *Judgment*, was not
'to be found in J. C. as St. *Bernard* well
'obſerves; becauſe He knew himſelf
'too well, to have a mean *opinion* of him-
'ſelf, or *think* himſelf contemptible, or
'*judge*, that He deſerv'd to be deſpis'd
'by all the World. But the ſecond De-
'gree, the true Humility of *Heart*, was
'the Humility of our Redeemer. He
'*took pleaſure* in deſcending, and beco-
'ming Man: He *lov'd* to be neglected,
'ſcorn'd, and ridicul'd: He heartily *de-*
'*ſir'd* to undergo all Injuries, Inſults,
'and Outrages. Behold the Example of
'our Maſter. See the Leſſon which he
'came to teach us, *Matth.* 11. 29. *Learn*
'*of me*, ſays he, *becauſe I am humble of*
'*Heart*.

'A

'A true Diſciple of Chriſt,
'is dead to all things in this *Ibid.*
'World; he hates it, and de-
'teſts it; he deſires not to be valued
'and eſteem'd in't; but embraces all
'Humiliations with the ſelf-ſame Paſ-
'ſion, which worldly Perſons have for
'Honour and Eſteem; and is as *glad* to
'meet with all occaſions of appearing
'inconſiderable and contemptible, as
'they are *over-joy'd* to meet with oppor-
'tunities of ſeeming Great.

'To know if we are true
'Diſciples of our Maſter, and *Rodr.*
'have perfectly acquired this *ch.* 16.
'Vertue; we muſt, by this
'Rule, examine well the Diſpoſition of
'our Heart, and ſee if we rejoice as
'much at being undervalued and de-
'ſpis'd, as others do at being honour'd
'and applauded.

'This Examen is the Touch-
'ſtone of Humility. For 'tis a- *Ibid.*
'greed upon by all, that Vertue
'is imperfect in us, till we practiſe it
'with ſatisfaction and pleaſure. If we
'find the leaſt repugnance in the Pra-
'ctice, when occaſion ſerves, and uſe
'much preparation to ſurmount the dif-
'ficulty of it, 'tis indeed the way to ac-
'quire ſuch Vertue; but it alſo is a
'certain

'certain mark, we have not yet acquir'd 'it in perfection. A Maſter of an Art, 'as *Ariſtotle* ſays, has ſuch a Habit of it, 'that he uſes no deliberation, but per-'forms the Operations of it with ſuch 'eaſe, he ſcarce knows what he's doing, 'when he does his work. And Philoſo-'phers tell us, that in ſurprizing Acci-'dents, we act not by Reflection, but by 'Habit. For which reaſon, 'tis in vain 'to examine, what our Inclinations are '(and whether we are truly humble, or 'no,) by what we do with preparation 'and leiſure: We muſt carefully Ex-'amine what we ſuddenly are apt to do, 'without deliberation.

Rodr. ch. 17. However, if by this Examen we obſerve, that notwithſtanding our Endeavours to improve, we frequently are importun'd, and ſometimes *overcome* by Pride and Vanity; if we are yet ſo far from taking pleaſure in the practice of Humility, that we are hardly able to ſupport in ſilence the uneaſineſs we ſuffer in it. Let not this diſcourage us; but on the contrary, the more we ſee our weakneſs, let it humble us the more; and let us learn from thence, 'to uſe 'our utmoſt diligence, in laying a more 'firm Foundation of Chriſtian Humili-

'ty,

'ty, which is *Humility of Heart.* 'Tis not 'a thing impoſſible. For, by the grace 'of God, we may be able, ſays St. *Auſtin*, not only to imitate the Example 'of the Saints, but alſo of the Sovereign 'Maſter of the Saints. He invites us all to imitate his Vertue; and can we fancy, he invites us to a thing impoſſible? '*Learn of me*, ſays he, *becauſe I am* 'Humble of Heart. And St. *Hierom* very 'well obſerves, that thoſe words of our 'Saviour, *Mat.* 19. 21. *If thou wilt be Perfect, come and follow me*, are a manifeſt 'Conviction, that by his Grace, (which 'always is at hand,) we have it in our 'Power, to be Perfect, if we will.

SECT. IV.

An Objection Anſwered.

IF Charity incline us to deſire our Neighbour's good, and to contribute what we can to their Salvation, why ſhould our *Humility* deſire, that all the World may undervalue us? Without their thinking well of us (in ſome capacity, or other,) we ſhall never do them any good; they never will confide in us, they will not hearken to us; we ſhall have no credit with them. Is't not therefore reaſonable, even by the Rule *Rodr. ch.* 29.

of

of common Charity, that we ſhould rather ſeek their Kindneſs and Eſteem, than their Averſion and Contempt?

'St. *Gregory* anſwers: 'Tis
Ibid. 'one thing to deſire our Neigh-
'bour's *Eſteem*; another, to re-
'joice at his Profit. 'Tis a Crime to 'covet Reputation for its own ſake, and 'rejoice at being Great in the opinion 'of Men. But yet, to wiſh as much of 'it as may be neceſſary for ſo good an 'End as that of ſerving Souls, and gain-'ing them to Chriſt, is an effect of Cha-'rity. And thus, 'tis lawful to deſire 'our Neighbour's good Opinion and E-'ſteem, *ſo far* as may enable us to do 'them good; becauſe we *thus* deſire it 'only for their Service, and the greater 'glory of our God, with a ſincere and to-'tal diſengagement from the Charms of 'Pride and Vanity. If any Man, who 'naturally *hates* a Potion, or a Pill, upon 'occaſion procures it, and *deſires* to take 'it; we may be aſſur'd, that ſuch a Man 'takes Phyſick, not for Phyſick ſake, but 'purely for his Health. So when a Man, 'who by an extraordinary grace of the 'Almighty, *hates* the app'auſe and ho-'nour of this World; when ſuch a Man 'procures, *deſires*, and manages with care, 'the good Opinion of Men; becauſe, 'it may be uſeful to him in their Ser-

'vice;

'vice; we may be aſſured, he only ſeeks 'God's Honour, not his own.

However, this great Truth is generally much abus'd; *Ibid.* and under the pretence of it, we only cover the Ambition, and diſguiſe our Vanity. We covet Honours, ſeek Preferments, and intrude our ſelves into Employments, letting ſlip no opportunity of *being* or *appearing* Great; and all this while, we plead, 'tis only *Charity*, to qualifie us for the better Service of our Neighbours. 'We have there-'fore need of no ſmall circumſpection to 'diſcern the Cheat. The way to know 'it, ſays St. *Gregory*, is to examine all *oc-'caſions*, where our Reputation is a thing 'indifferent, and *uſeleſs* to our Neighbour. 'If in theſe, we care not for the good 'Opinion of Men, we may ſuppoſe, that 'when we are concern'd for't, it is only 'for our Neighbor's ſake, & not our own.

St. *Gregory* thus unties the Knot; but St. *Francis* cuts it *Ibid.* with more eaſe, and much more clearly takes away the difficulty.

'Whatſoever the *Occaſions*, 'are, He roundly anſwers; *Ibid.* 'that our *Charity* begins at 'home; that if it inclines us to deſire 'our *Neighbour*'s ſpiritual good; with 'much more reaſon, it inclines us to de-'ſire

'fire our *Own*; that if our Reputation 'may be uſeful to our Neighbour; our 'Diſgraces and Humiliations (incurred 'without our fault) may prove more 'beneficial to our ſelves. If when I 'preach, *ſays he*, or when I practice any 'Vertue which is edifying, I am pleas'd 'with Praiſes, which endanger my Sal'vation; becauſe their good Opinion 'of me, helps them to improve by my 'Inſtruction, and Example. How much 'reaſon have I, for my own ſake, to re'joice a great deal more, when (having 'done my beſt) I ſtill am undervalued 'and deſpis'd; becauſe, by this means, 'I my ſelf am more acceptable to God, 'and more ſecure of my Eternal Happi'neſs?

See Rodr. ch. 29. Our Saviour himſelf, whoſe Charity inclin'd him to deſcend from Heaven, and to ſacrifice his Life for Sinners; knew that many unbelieving Souls were loſt, by undervaluing and deſpiſing him; He knew that many Millions of them would have been converted, if they had admir'd and honour'd him as he deſerv'd; and yet, He never ſought for *worldly Honour*, as a means to *ſave them*; but altho' their Souls were dear to Him, his Honour was not. As *He came*

came from Heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that ſent him, Joh. 6. 38. So he came to ſeek the Honour of his Father, not his own, *Joh.* 8. 49, 50. *I honour my Father*, ſays He: *I ſeek not my own glory.* 'Tis enough, that whilſt I only 'ſeek his Honour, he takes care of mine; 'and that altho' I never ſeek my own, 'yet *there is One that* always *ſeeks and* 'judges it, *v.* 50. and always will be ſure 'to do me Juſtice. Let us follow the Ex-'ample of our Saviour, let us make it 'the chief Buſineſs of our Life, *to do the* 'will of him that ſent us, not our *own*. Let 'us honour our Father in Heaven. Let '*his* Honour *only* be the Object of our 'care, and never let us mind *our own*, but 'reſt content, that He himſelf takes care 'of it. Let no appearance of our Neigh-bour's *Profit*, cheat us into an Ambition of being popular; but let us faithfully, in all things, do our Duty, for the Love and Honour of our God; and as for Mens Opinion of us, let us leave it to his Providence. His Honour here be-low, is left (as I may ſay) to our Diſ-cretion: He commits it to our Care: He forces not our *Liberty*, but only offers the aſſiſtance of his *Grace*, and lets us *Ho-nour* him, and ſerve him as we pleaſe. Shall God thus truſt his Honour in ſo bad a hand as ours? And ſhall not we be ſatis-

fied

fied, to truſt our Honour in ſo good a hand as his?

SECT. V.

Third Degree of Humility.

'THE Third and laſt 'Degree, is the *Humility of Saints*, who are moſt 'humble in the ſight of God, when they 'are moſt eſteemed and celebrated by 'the World. *Rodr. ch. 30.*

'When a Perſon full of Faults and 'Imperfections, has a mean Opinion of 'himſelf; eſteems himſelf no better 'than he is; and is content to be repu-'ted ſuch as he eſteems himſelf; we 'may commend him, ſays St. *Bernard*; 'but have little Reaſon to admire him. 'Who admires to ſee a poor Man have a 'mean Opinion of his Riches? Think 'himſelf no richer than he is; and reſt 'content, that others think ſo too: But 'if a Rich Man rank himſelf amongſt 'the Poor, and treat them with reſpect, 'as if he were the leaſt conſiderable of 'them all; this very well deſerves our 'Admiration.

By this Deſcription of the third Degree, we plainly ſee, that the Humility of Saints, and the Humility of Sinners, is the ſame in Subſtance, tho' they differ

differ in *Perfection.* 'Tis true; we wonder not, to ſee a Man ſtand ſteddy upon even ground. But when we ſee the ſame Man ſtand as firm upon a lofty Pinnacle, we gaze, and wonder at him. All this while, the Man's the ſame; tho' we admire him more, becauſe the Place is higher, and the difficulty greater. So 'tis in our preſent caſe. Humility is either of the Judgment or the Heart. The third degree is comprehended in the firſt, and ſecond; but however, we admire much more an humble Saint; becauſe his eminent degree of Sanctity is higher, and the difficulty of his being humble, therefore ſeems much greater.

I ſay ſeems greater, becauſe I am not apt to think it ſo, upon ſecond thoughts. My Reaſon in ſhort, is this; Humility of judgment and of Heart, are chiefly grounded in the knowledge of our ſelves, and Love of God. The firſt induces us to have a mean Opinion of our ſelves; the more we know our ſelves, the more we think our ſelves contemptible, the more we judge that we deſerve to be deſpis'd by all the World. The ſecond makes us glad to be neglected, and deſire to be contemned; and as the Love of God encreaſes in our Hearts, the more we hate and ſcorn the tran-

tranſitory Honour of this World, the more we love to follow the Example of an humble God, the more we heartily deſire to be agreeable to none but him, as being every day more ſenſible of this great Truth; he only *is approved whom God commends*, 2 Cor. 10. 18.

Let us only lay theſe Notions right together. 1. The Knowledge of our ſelves and Love of God, is, that which makes Men Saints. No Perſon ever was a Saint without them; no Man ever was a Sinner with them: And the more this Knowledge and this Love encreaſe, the greater is the Sanctity. 2. This Knowledge and this Love, is that which makes Men humble; Knowledge helps them to be humble in their *Judgments*; Love aſſiſts them to be humble in their Hearts: The more they know and Love, the greater is the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace, which is the only means of making all things eaſie to us. Why then may we not conclude? Whoever is a Saint, the greater Saint he is, the eaſier 'tis for him to be humble.

Sinners indeed, have much more matter for Humility to work upon. Their Weakneſs, their Corruption, and the Miſery of their deplorable Condition, are incomparably worſe. But, which

is

is worſt of all, they are ſo miſerably blind, as not to know their Miſery. A Beggar, in his Drink, imagines he's a Prince, and is as proud as if he were. 'Tis true, he's miſerably poor, but ſince he knows it not, what ſignifies it? He's as proud as if he were the richeſt Man alive. 'Tis ſo with Sinners. They are drunk with Self-Love, Pride and Vanity. They little know, and much leſs think, how Poor, how Miſerable, how Contemptible they are. And we may very well apply to them thoſe Words of the *Apocalypſe*, Chap. 3. 17, 18. *Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not, that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked:* Therefore *I counſel thee, to anoint thy Eyes, that thou mayeſt ſee.* This is the general Reaſon, why Humility is harder to be found in Sinners than in Saints. The Firſt have more to humble them; but the more they have, the blinder they are, and the leſs they know it. The ſecond have leſs to humble them; but the leſs they have, the more their Eyes are open by God's Grace, and the more clearly they diſcover what's enough to make them fear and tremble all their Life.

SECT. VI.

First Reason, why the greatest Saints are the most humble.

I Shall only add two Reasons more, because all Saints (I speak of such as are now living,) are compriz'd in these two Classes: They are either such as have been Sinners heretofore, or such as may be so hereafter.

The first Reason is so universal, that it comprehends them both; but more particularly, those who have preserv'd the Innocence of their Bap-
D.Sp.ch.26. tismal Grace. 'Tis gathered from that Oracle of Scripture, ‘ *Work out your Salvation with fear* ‘ *and trembling; for it is God who works in* ‘ *you to will and to do, according to his plea-* ‘*sure*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. See the unsearcha- ‘ble Abyss of the Almighty's Judgments! ‘ where 'tis dangerous to dwell too long, ‘ and search too curiously, lest it cast us ‘ into an excess of fear. 'Tis enough, ‘ that none are saved, but who per- ‘ severe to the end; and that the ‘ greatest Saints can never be assured of ‘ their Perseverance. 'Tis a special Gift ‘ which the Apostle chiefly points at, ‘ when he says, *Rom.* 9. 18, 16. *God has* ‘ *mercy on whom he will have mercy. It is* ‘ *not*

'*not of him that wills, or him that runs*;
'*but of God that ſhews mercy*; and again,
'Eph. 2. 8, 9. *By Grace you are ſaved*; *and*
'*and that not of your ſelves*; *it is the Gift*
'*of God, not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould*
'*boaſt.* Alas! how is it poſſible for any
'Saint to be aſſured of his condition for
'the future, ſince he is not certain even
'of his preſent State? Who can ſound
'the bottom of our Hearts? Or rather,
'who can ſound the Heart of God, and
'tell us, what he thinks of our condition?
'Who is he, that can aſſure us, we are
'good enough to be rewarded by him?
'*Woe be to that Life, how innocent ſoever,*
'ſays St. *Auſtin, which he Judges without*
'*Mercy*, Pſal. 19. 12. *Who is he*, ſays *Da-*
'*vid, that can underſtand his Failings?*
'*Cleanſe me from my ſecret faults*, O *Lord*,
'Pſal. 143. 2. and *enter not into judgment*
'*with thy Servant*; *for in thy ſight ſhall no*
'*Man living be juſtified*; if once Thou
'judgeſt him according to the utmoſt ri-
'gour of thy Juſtice. Who is there that
'does not tremble, when he hears the
'Juſt and Holy Man, whom God him-
'ſelf was pleaſed to praiſe, confeſs, that
'all his life time, God was ſuch a *Ter-*
'*rour* to him, he was hardly able *to en-*
'*dure it*? Job 31. 23. Who can, without
'trembling, hear the Prophet *Iſaiah* tell

'us, 64. 6. *we are all unclean; and all our 'righteous works, like filthy Rags?* Or hear 'S. *Hierom*, in the Life of S. *Hilarion*, tell 'us, how that bleſſed Saint was terrifi-'ed at the approach of Death; and to 'encourage his departing Soul, ſaid to 'himſelf, *Go forth my Soul; what art thou 'Now afraid of? Thou haſt ſerved thy God 'theſe threeſcore and ten years; and d'ſt 'thou tremble Now to appear before him?*

Let us therefore *fear* and *tremble* in the way to Heaven. Never let us fancy, we are ſo advanc'd in Vertue, that we need not *fear*. The greateſt Saints were never ſo *Preſumptuous*, as to baniſh from their thoughts the *Fear* of God, *Phil.* 2. 12. *They work'd out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*. They were always full of Fear; and this *Fear* always *Humbled* them. They were not *Blinded* as we are, with *Paſſion* and *Humour*; but, as they improv'd in Grace, they every day diſcover'd more and more their ſecret Imperfections.

The Property of *Grace* is to *enlighten* the underſtanding, as well as to *enflame* the Heart. It makes us *Know* our Miſery, and *Love* our God, who only can deliver us. Theſe two Effects of Grace were lively repreſented on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, by that myſterious Fire which reſted on the Heads of the Apoſtles.

Fire

Fire gives Light and Heat; and as the Fire encreaſes, it affords more *Heat* and greater *Light*. So, Grace *Enlightens* and *Inflames* the *Minds* and *Hearts* of Saints, with *Knowledge* of themſelves, and *Love* of God; and as their Grace improves, this *Heat* and *Light* encreaſes: They diſcern more *clearly* the innumerable dangers that ſurround them; and become more *Humble under the Almighty Hand of God*, 1 Pet. 5. 6.

S. *Paul* compares the different States of *Sin* and *Grace*, to Light and Darkneſs, Night and Day, *Rom.* 13. 12, 13. *The Night*, ſays he, *is ſpent; the Day is at hand. Let us caſt off the Works of Darkneſs, and put on the Armour of Light. Let us walk honeſtly, as in the Day.* A Traveller benighted, walks he knows not where. He hardly ſees his *Hand*; much leſs his *Feet*. He ſees perhaps, ſome *Stars* ſhine through the Clouds, whoſe ſparkling Light ſerves only to amuſe him, and miſlead him to a Precipice. But, when the Riſing Sun appears, the Stars immediately vaniſh out of ſight; our Traveller no longer gazes there, but has a much more uſeful Proſpect of the Earth below him; where he plainly ſees the Ground he goes upon, the Riſings, the Deſcents, the Inequalities, and Precipices of it. Sinners, like

benighted Travellers, march blindly on; mind little what they *Do*; and much leſs where they *Go*. However, now and then they practiſe ſome *good Actions*, either out of cuſtom, or good nature; and amuſe themſelves with ſome few ſemblances of Vertue, whoſe dim luſtre ſeems perhaps, more *ſparkling* in the *Darkneſs* of that *Night*, which hides them even from themſelves. But, 'tis not ſo with Saints. Their *Night is ſpent*; their *Day* appears. The Sun of Juſtice *Riſes in their Hearts*, 2 Pet. 1. 19. Their *Vertues*, like the *Stars*, (which only ſhine in *Darkneſs*,) diſappear immediately. The Clay which they are made of, the Corruption of their Nature, the Enormity of Sin, the Power of their Paſſions, and the Weakneſs of their Reaſon: Theſe are Motives of Humility, which *Now* they *clearly* ſee, and *daily* have before their eyes. Beſides all this, they plainly ſee an infinite variety of Artifices and Diſguiſes of Self-love, which eaſily aſſumes all ſhapes, and counterfeits all Vertues, even Charity it ſelf. And therefore they ſuſpect the beſt of all their Actions, trembling at the very thought of them, for fear they may be ſecretly corrupted by Self-love. But, above all, the importunity of Pride, which never ceaſes

to

to attack them; but continually endeavours to ſurprize them, (notwithſtanding all theſe Motives of Humility,) is, that which ſeems the moſt *extravagant* of all their *faults*; and humbles them the moſt.

Behold the Miſery of Man! And, what can be more miſerable, if the Sight of ſo much miſery ſuffices not to humble him! The greateſt Saint, who is not conſcious to himſelf of any forfeiture of his firſt Innocence, has no Aſſurance of his being juſtified. 'He may be in 'the State of Grace; but 'whether ſo, or not, He *D. Sp. ch.* 27. 'cannot tell. And, which 'is worſe, altho' he knew it, He has no 'Aſſurance of *Perſevering* one ſingle mo-'ment. He who ſtands, may fall; and 'He who is a Saint, may prove a Sinner. 'Nothing but God's Grace is able to 'ſupport him, to the end; and the con-'tinuance of this Grace, requires ſo 'faithful and ſo punctual a Co-operati-'on with it, that a very ſmall Omiſſion 'oftentimes ſuffices to deprive him of it. 'His Perſeverance is, as it were, a Chain 'of Graces, link'd together, and continu-'ed to the utmoſt period of his Life; and 'this is more than He can Merit. All 'that he can do, is to be always *vigilant*

'and *faithful* in the *Uſe* of
S. Tho. 1 2. 'every ſingle Grace God
q. 114 9. 'offers him. One Grace,
'well us'd, draws on ano-
'ther; this a third, and that a fourth:
'But, if he trip the leaſt in his Fidelity,
'the *Chain* immediately breaks. And
'this is that great *Diligence*, which the
'Apoſtle recommends ſo earneſtly to all
'good Chriſtians; *Uſe Diligence*, ſays he,
'*to make your Calling and Election ſure*,
'2 Pet. 1. 10. *For if you do, you ſhall never*
'*fall*. I muſt confeſs, this Saying is ex-
'treamly comfortable; *if we do*: But, *if*
'*we do not*, what becomes of us? If all our
'life, we *Uſe* ſuch *Diligence*, the Apoſtle
'tells us, we *ſhall never fall*: But, *if we do*
'*not*, what remains, but that the greateſt
'Saint amongſt us will be ſure to fall?
'Conſider this, and tremble, whoſoe're
'you are: Aſſure your ſelf, the more you
'are a *Saint*, the more you'll *tremble*, and
'the more you'll *ſee*, how terrible a truth
'this is; which is one Reaſon why the
'greateſt Saints (who are the moſt con-
'vinc'd of it) are always the moſt *Humble*.

SECT. VII.

Second Reaſon, why the greateſt Saints are the moſt humble.

I Have ſaid enough of Saints, who have preſerv'd their Innocence. The Second

cond Reaſon only has regard to Saints, who by their Crimes, have loſt it heretofore; and *now* are truly Penitent. If They who *Know themſelves* the beſt, are therefore the moſt Humble, becauſe they *Doubt* the moſt of their *Perſeverance*. Surely, thoſe who *Know* moſt clearly the *Enormity of Sin*, which they are guilty of, have much more Reaſon to be Humble, becauſe they *Doubt* much more of their obtaining *Pardon*.

There is a great difference, ſays St. *Jerome, betwixt a Man whoſe Veſſel is entire, and richly laden, when he ſails into the Port of Bliſs; and Him who after Shipwrack, after Swiming for his Life, rides naked on a Plank; and after being daſhed a hundred times againſt the Rocks, at length is caſt upon the Sands, half dead, and almoſt bruis'd to pieces.* If a Man, who ſails in a ſound Veſſel, never is ſecure from Storms which may ariſe, but always *doubts* of his arrival at the Port; we may be ſure, his Caſe is much more *doubtful*, and more terrible, who has already ſuffered Shipwrack, and has nothing left him, but a ſingle Plank, to bear him up. Epiſt. ad Salv.

'Tis true; it happens now and then (and 'tis a comfortable Obſervation of a Holy Man, whoſe Name is famous in

our preſent Age:) 'It
Abbe Jean. Entretien. 7. 'happens now and then,
'that He, *to whom the Winds*
'*and Sea obey*, Matth. 8. 27.
'is pleaſed to make them for a time, ſo
'calm and quiet, that a Man who ſwims
'upon his Plank with induſtry and
'courage, meets at length by Provi-
'dence, another Veſſel, better than his
'own; and ſails with much more Com-
'fort, much more Joy, into the Haven,
'than he would have done, if he had ne-
'ver ſuffered Shipwrack in Storm. St.
'*John Climacus*, in his 15. Degree, in-
'quires, *Which of the two is Greater in the*
'*ſight of God; he who died by ſin, and roſe*
'*again to Life by Grace?* Or, *he who never*
'*died the ſpiritual Death of Sin?* And an-
'ſwers, that *whoever Thinks the Innocent*
'*more happy of the two, is much miſtaken.*
'The Reaſon is, becauſe all Sanctity is
'founded in *Humility* and *Charity*.
'Whoever *Loves* God beſt, and is moſt
'*Humble*, is the greateſt Saint. It happens
'oftentimes, that *He to whom a little is*
'*forgiven, loves but little*, Luke 7. 47. and
'it happens now and then, that He *loves*
'beſt, who is moſt mercifully pardon'd,
'*and forgiven moſt*, v. 43. We read in
'Scripture ſeveral Examples of this na-
'ture. *Zacharj*, as ſoon as he had done
'ſuffi-

'ſufficient Penance for his Incredulity, 'immediately had his Speech reſtor'd 'him; and not only that, but he was 'alſo honour'd with the Gift of Pro- 'phecying; which we do not read he 'had before. The *Prodigal* receiv'd much 'greater Favours and Careſſes from his 'Father, than he ever had Experienc'd 'before he left him. *Lazarus* himſelf, '(who was the *Figure* of great Sinners,) 'never had the honour to be entertain'd, 'at Table, with the Son of God, before 'he was, by miracle, rais'd from the 'Grave. S. *Peter* had not confidence, 'before he ſinn'd, to ask our Saviour, 'Who he was that would betray him? 'But, when he had waſh'd away his ſins 'with Tears, he was permitted to be 'more familiar with his Maſter, and 'was made the Sovereign Paſtor of his 'Church. From whence 'tis eaſie to 'conclude, that Sinners may *ſometimes* by 'Penance, grow more *Perfect* than thoſe 'Saints, who having kept their Inno- 'cence, *Love* God leſs fervently, and ſerve 'him with more coldneſs and indiffe- 'rence. *Behold*, ſays St. *Ambroſe*, *the great 'Goodneſs of our God! How liberal and gene- 'rous He is, to whom he pleaſes to be merci- 'ful! He's not contented to reſtore what they 'have loſt. He grants them over and above,*

'ſuch

'*ſuch Graces, and ſuch Favours, as they ne-*
'*ver durſt have hop'd for.* Thus as the A-
'poſtle ſays, *Rom.*5.20. *where Sin abound-*
'*ed, Grace abounds much more*; becauſe the
'more *Sin humbles* them, the more they
'are *Exalted.* When a Penitent, whom
'Sin had blinded, once begins to See,
'and to diſcover *clearly* the Enormity of
'his Offences, he has much more reaſon
'to be humble all his Life, than if he
'had been always innocent. He looks
'upon himſelf no better than a Crimi-
'nal repriev'd, who is upon his good
'behaviour of his Pardon; and per-
'ſuades himſelf, that he can never give
'ſufficient proof of his Fidelity, and the
'Sincerity of his Repentance. All his
'*Exerciſes* of continual *Penance* never
'make him Vain; but only ſerve to
'humble him the more; becauſe he
'looks upon them, only as the Remedies
'of his Diſeaſes; and ſuch Remedies as
'he muſt uſe till Death; which is the
'only End he hopes to ſee of his Di-
'ſtempers. The Employment of his
'Thoughts, is the Conſideration of his
'grievous Sins, which he perpetually
'laments; where-e're he goes, he never
'leaves the doleful Memory behind him,
'*Mich.* 6. 15. *His Humiliation is always in*
'*the midſt of him.* Since therefore, he who
'hates

'hates the Proud, *Gives grace to the Hum-*
'*ble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Is't not lawful to infer,
'that Sinners may *ſometimes* arrive to a
'more eminent Degree of Sanctity, than
'many of thoſe Saints, who never *fell*
'quite down, but yet *walk ſlowly* in the
'way to Heaven?

This happens, *now and then*, 'tis true; but ſuch Examples are as *rare*, as they are *great*. They are effects of more than ordinary Grace, which God grants only *when* and *where* he pleaſes. S. *Peter* never would have *wept* ſo *bitterly*, if Jeſus had not mercifully *turn'd* and *look'd upon him*, Luke 22. 61, 62. *Lazarus* had never riſen from the Grave, if Jeſus had not come himſelf, and call'd him forth *with a loud Voice*, Jo. 11. 43. The *Prodigal* had never come back to his Father, if he had not firſt *come to himſelf*, Luke 15. 17. Alas, poor Wretch! he follow'd *Swine* before; and if he might *have filled his Belly with their Husks*, v. 16. he would have been contented. See the blindneſs of a Sinner! But, as ſoon as ever *he came to himſelf*, v. 17. his Eyes were open; and the opening of his Eyes was that which brought *him to himſelf*. He *Saw* the great Enormity of his Offences, v. 18. *I have ſinn'd*, ſays he, *I have ſinn'd againſt Heaven*, v. 19.. *and before* my Father's

Father's Face; *I am not worthy to be call'd his Son.* The Idea of his Sins was now ſo terrible, and made ſo deep impreſſion in him; that it humbled him, not only in his *Judgment*, but his *Heart*. It humbled him ſo much, that he not only *thought* himſelf unworthy, but *deſired* to be receiv'd accordingly; and begg'd his Father not to entertain him as a *Son*, but *as one of* his *hired ſervants*, v. 19.

When once the Grace of God enlightens us, and by a Miracle of Mercy, breaks through the impenetrable Darkneſs which our Paſſions cloud our Reaſon with; this *Light* diſcovers clearly to us the Enormity of Sin; and, as this Light encreaſes, we diſcover daily more and more. This Light is followed with a Sacred *Heat*, that ſoftens the obdurate coldneſs of our Temper, by which means, the terrible Idea of our Guilt makes every day, a deeper and more ſenſible *Impreſſion* in our Hearts. And This is the Second Reaſon, why the Greateſt Saints are the moſt humble; becauſe, the greater Saints they are, the more They *ſee* the great Enormity of Sin; the more They *feel* the Terrour of their Guilt, the more They *doubt* of their obtaining *Pardon*; and the more They *fear* and *tremble* all their Life.

I.

The Enormity of Sin.

THE humble Penitent, whoſe Words I lately cited, thus deſcribes his *coming to himſelf*. 'Whilſt 'I purſued, ſays he, the *Entretien.* 7. 'wandring Errors of my 'Heart, *I drunk Iniquity like Water*, Job '15. 16. and not only that, but was ſo 'hardned, and ſo *blind*, that whatſoe're 'I read, or heard of Sin, made no Im-'preſſion; and inſtead of working my 'Converſion, only ſerv'd to render me 'more Guilty, and more inexcuſable. 'At length, the happy Time arriv'd, in 'which it pleas'd the *Father of* all *Mer-'cies*, 1 Cor. 1. 3. and *the God of all* our 'Comfort, to beſtow a favourable *look* up-'on me; and the firſt Glance preſently 'diſperſt the Darkneſs of my Soul, the 'very Dawning of that Light diſcover'd 'to me the Infernal Monſter, in whoſe 'company, I had ſo long liv'd uncon-'cern'd. I ſaw, and was immediately 'ſeiz'd with ſo prodigious *Fear* and '*Trembling* at the Sight, that I am con-'fident, as long as I have breath to live, 'I never ſhall recover it.

S *Iſidore* of *Damiette*, deſcribes this Monſter in ſurprizing *Ibid.*

Terms:

Terms: *Some think*, ſays he, *that the Devil was the Father of Sin: And others on the contrary maintain, that Sin was the Father of the Devil. Be it how you pleaſe*, ſays he, *I leave you to imagine, either what a Father it muſt be of ſuch a Son; or, what a Son we may expect of ſuch a Father.* This, I muſt confeſs, is black enough. But all it's Blackneſs only ſerves to leave us in the Dark. We are not yet, one jot the nigher Knowing, what ſins is. And all that we can gather from *it*, is that we are never like to have it painted to the Life, unleſs an *Angel* undertake to draw it, and the *Devil* ſit for the Picture.

The Philoſopher was in the right of it, when being ask'd the queſtion, *what God is?* He took a Day, then two, then three; and after all, ingeniouſly confeſs'd, the more he thought of it, the more he found himſelf unable to expreſs it. If a Man ſhould ask me the like queſtion, *What a Sinner is?* I ſhould not be aſham'd to own, I am not able to deſcribe the one, no more than he was to expreſs the other.

If God be the Supreme and Sovereign *Good*, if *with Him* all things elſe are good, if nothing elſe be good *without Him*; we may, in proportion, ſay the ſame of *Sin*. 'Tis the Supreme and Sovereign *Evil*.

All

All things elſe are evil *with it*; nothing elſe is *ſo* to us *without it*.

If it be true, that All good comes from God, as from the Firſt and Univerſal Cauſe of All; the ſame is true of *Sin*, which is the Firſt and Univerſal Root of all our Evils. God made Heaven; *Sin* made Hell. He made the Earth; *Sin* made it miſerable. He created Angels in his Paradiſe *above*; *Sin* threw them *down*. He created Man and Woman in our Paradiſe *below*; and *Sin* immediately caſt them *out*.

Conſider all the Torments of the Damn'd, the cruel Pains of thoſe Eternal Flames, the never ceaſing Anguiſhes of their deſpairing Rage, *&c.* *All* This, and *More* than All that you are able to conceive, is only Part of the Effects of *Sin*. 'Twas *Sin* prepar'd *All* this, and *More* than this, for Them and Us.

If what you only know by *Faith*, make no impreſſion; if you are more ſenſible of what we ſuffer *here*, than what they ſuffer *there*: Conſider the Revolt of all the Elements againſt us Fire which once was only made to ſerve us, *now* becomes the fatal inſtrument, our angry God makes uſe of, to deſtroy and puniſh us: The very Air we breathe, infects us with Diſeaſes; and the Earth we walk on, trem-

trembles, opens, buries us alive. All This had never been, if Man had never Sinn'd.

Conſider all the Miſeries, which Famine, Plague and War, involve us in; the Poverty of half the World, with all the Hunger, Thirſt, Cold, Sickneſs and Deſpair, which follow it: And after all, the Civil War of Paſſion againſt Reaſon; which, if well examin'd, will be found the Greateſt and moſt Painful of our Miſeries; from whence proceed our Ignorance and Malice; and from thence all Immoralities, Corruptions, and Scandals, which we meet with in the World. All This had never been, if Man had never Sinn'd.

Conſider all the ſad Diſaſters, You or Yours have met with; all the Loſſes you have ſuffer'd in your Family, Eſtate or Friends; and all the Croſſes you have born with ſo much Pain; whatever you have undergone, you never had been ſubject to, your Heart had never ask'd, if Man had never Sinn'd. Accurſed Sin! the only firſt Beginning, and firſt Cauſe of all our Miſchiefs, both in this World and the next!

My God! if once we *ſaw* Thee *as Thou art*, 1 Jo. 3. 2. we could not poſſibly be tepid and indifferent; the very *Sight* of ſo

ſo much Goodneſs, would, in ſpight of all our Paſſions, force us to Admire, Adore, and *Love* Thee *above all* the World. Accurſed Sin! if once we could but *ſee* Thee *as Thou art*, the very *ſight* of ſo much *Malice* would not ſuffer us to *Love* Thee any longer; it would be *impoſſible* for either World, or Fleſh, or Devil, to prevail againſt us; we ſhould *Hate* Thee *above all things*; we ſhould then abhor, deteſt, abominate Thee evermore. Accurſed Sinner! Such *Goodneſs*, and Thou not *Love* it! Such *Malice*, and Thou not *Hate* it!

If the Eternal Source of all our Good be infinite in *Goodneſs*, What's the Firſt and Everlaſting Root of all our Evils? Is't not infinite in *Malice*? Queſtionleſs it is. Beſides, God is not only *infinite* in Goodneſs; He is infinite in Wiſdom, infinite in Juſtice, infinite in all Perfections whatſoever. So is *Sin*. It is not only *infinite* in Malice; it is alſo infinite in Folly, infinite in all the Notions we can frame of it. The Treachery, Diſloyalty, Impiety, Ingratitude, Preſumption, Pride, and Inſolence: All This, and more than all that we can think of, All is *infinite*.

According to the Principle which I have here laid down, if any Man ſhould

ask

ask me, *what a Sinner is?* I ſhould not know what other Name to give him: SINNER is his only Name: And I can think of nothing like *Him*, but the Man related in S. *Mark*, Ch 5. 2. *He* is poſſeſs'd with an *Unclean Spirit*, poſſeſs'd with the Devil; and which is worſe, poſſeſs'd with *Sin*, the Father of the Devil. He is ſo unruly in his Paſſions, Inclinations and Humours, that *No Man can bind Him*, v. 3. *No, not Chains.* The Laws of God are his *Fetters*; but theſe *He breaks in pieces*, v. 4. *neither* is it poſſible for *any Man* to *tame Him.* If you ask his *Name*, the Goſpel ſays, 'tis *Legion*, v. 9. becauſe He *is many*. *Sin* and *Sinner*, are two Names, like that of *Legion*: Every Mortal Sin, is *many* Sins; and every Sinner, is as *many* Sinners. 'Tis impoſſible to number all the Aggravations of a Mortal Sin: They are as numberleſs as the Perfections of our offended God: And therefore I ſhall only mention thoſe which are the moſt Notorious, the moſt Obvious to common Senſe, and ſuch as are moſt Odious betwixt Man and Man.

A Sinner! Every Sinner is in every mortal Sin, not only guilty of *one* Crime, but of a *Legion* of Crimes; an *Ungrateful* Villain, who betrays his Benefactor; a *Preſumptuous* Slave, who Abuſes his Deliverer;

liverer; a *Proud* Servant, who Deſpiſes his Maſter; an *Inſolent* Criminal, who Offends before his Judge's Face. All theſe are Crimes we have a Horrour of, when we obſerve them only betwixt Fellow-creatures, betwixt Man and Man. All theſe are *infinitely* Greater, betwixt Man and God. And every Mortal Sin, includes the utmoſt Aggravations of them All.

II.

The great Ingratitude, Preſumption, Pride, and Inſolence, &c.

AN ungrateful *Villain*. An Upſtart, *rais'd* from leſs than Duſt. An empty Thing, extracted out of Nothing. That ſuch a *Thing* as this, and ſo *exalted* as it is, ſhould be ſo ſtupid, ſo inſenſible of all his Obligations, ſo unmindful of the Favours he receives, and ſo ill-natur'd to his greateſt Benefactor; who continually *makes* him all *he* is, who daily *gives* him all *he has*, to whom he owes the Bread he eats, the Air he breathes, the Ground he goes upon, the Hand he moves, the very Life he ſpends in Sin, and all the Time allow'd him to repent! Can ſuch a Creature, ſo oblig'd by ſuch a *Benefactor*, be ſo baſely and ſo horribly *ungrateful*, to *betray* Him, and prefer before

fore Him the unreaſonable ſatisfaction, of a ſilly Humour, of a ſhameful Paſſion, of a ſinful Inclination? Open (once for all) thy Eyes, Blind Sinner; and confeſs, that no *Ingratitude*, but that of *Judas*, can compare to thine.

A *Slave*, (I wiſh he were ſo, to his Maſter;) A Slave to Paſſion and Humour; A Slave to Sin and Miſery; A Slave condemn'd to worſe than Galleys, during Life; and afterwards to the Eternal Flames of Hell, where *neither Eye has ſeen, nor Ear has heard; nor has it* ever *entred into the Heart of* any *Man*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. what Torments God's great Juſtice *has prepar'd for thoſe* who dare *abuſe* his Mercy. A vile Slave, *deliver'd* from the miſchief of *all* This, by God himſelf, deſcending from his Glory, living here a poor and painful Life, and laying down the ſame with every drop of his moſt precious Blood, to pay the ranſom of this Wretch: That ſuch a Slave, deliver'd ſo, by ſuch a hand, ſhould offer to abuſe the Mercy which *once* ſav'd him, and *ſtill* holds him by a ſlender thread, from falling into everlaſting Miſery!

A *Servant*, I ſhould have ſaid, a miſerable Inſect, full of ſinful Putrefaction, a vile Spawn of Man's original Corruption, a Worm, whoſe very Crawling on its

its Fellow-duſt, is more Preferment than it can deſerve. That ſuch a Thing as This, ſhould be ſo proud, as to deſpiſe the *Maſter* of the World! So *Great*, ſo *Wiſe*, ſo Infinitely *Perfect*, and ſo every way *Deſerving* as He is! This Vermin has indeed a *Soul*; an *Angel* once by Grace, but now by *Sin*, a *Devil*, black as Hell it ſelf; a *Lucifer* that will be *knowing Good and Evil*, Gen. 3. 5. will be *like the Higheſt*, Iſa. 14. 14. will pretend to Govern in his Maſter's Houſe, *deſpiſe* his Orders, ſlight his Menaces, neglect his Admonitions. *Be aſtoniſh'd, O ye Heavens, at this*, Jer. 2. 12.

A moſt inſolent *Criminal*; a Criminal ſo *inſolent*, as to offend before God's Face; in preſence of his General, his King, his Father, his Deliverer, his Benefactor, and his Maſter; and beſides all this, in preſence of his *Judge*, before the very *Bar*, where he continually is upon his *Tryal* for his everlaſting *Life* or *Death*. Our Saviour ſays, *Joh.* 3. 18. *that whoſoever believes not, is condemn'd already*. We may ſay the ſame of every Sinner: In the very moment he offends, *He is condemn'd already*. His *All-ſeeing* Judge is always *Witneſs* of his Thoughts, Words, Actions and Deſires; and He no ſooner is a *Criminal*, but he is *Try'd* and *Judg'd*.

This

This *Inſolence* of his, in ſome reſpect, exceeds all other Aggravations of his Crime. 'Tis an Extravagance of which we hardly find the leaſt Example betwixt Man and Man. We often hear of Soldiers that Deſert: But whenſoe're they go, they ſteal away; we never hear, that they acquaint their General with ſuch Deſigns. We often hear of Subjects that conſpire againſt the Government; but never hear them talk ſuch Matters loudly, in the hearing of their Prince. We often hear of Murders, Robberies, and many other Outrages, committed in the World: But when the Priſoner once was brought to Tryal, did you ever hear, He either Robb'd, or Murder'd, at the Bar? No, no, ſuch Inſolence was never heard of, betwixt Man and Man. And, yet this very *Inſolence* is infinitely leſs than *Ours*, which we are always guilty of, in every Mortal Sin.

I ſay no more. I tremble at the very thought of having ſaid ſo much, when I reflect, how All that we can either ſay or think, will ne're convert us without *Grace*. There's nothing but the Grace of God can make a deep *Impreſſion* of it in our Hearts.

III.

III.

Our Saviour's Idea of Sin, and the Impreſſion it made upon him.

OUR Saviour Jeſus Chriſt beſt knew the great *Enormity* of Sin; and we may judge how great it is, by the *Impreſſion* which it made upon Him; when the approaching Hour of his Paſſion, laid before his Eyes the terrible *Idea* of it.

'Twas the firſt Bloody Scene of all his Sufferings. *He began to be Sorrowful and very heavy*, Matth. 26. 37. A Deluge of Grief broke in upon his Soul, quite overwhelm'd his Heart, and lay ſo heavy upon his fearful Thoughts, He was not able to conceal it any longer, and ſupport the preſſing weight of his Affliction, all alone, in ſilence. His three moſt Dear and moſt Familiar Diſciples, were ſurpriz'd ſo much, to ſee this ſudden alteration in their deareſt Lord; they were not able to enquire the Cauſe, but like *Job*'s three Friends, they ſtood aſtoniſh'd, and ſpoke not one word to Him, *becauſe they ſaw his Grief was very Great* Job 2. 13.

Our Saviour could hold no longer, but broke out into this doleful Expreſſion, *Matth.* 26 38. *My Soul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death.* Ah my dear Diſciples! if you knew, as well as I do, all the Motives of my Grief, you would

not wonder, that the very Thought of them makes me look pale, and ſhews you the face of Death in my countenance. The violent pangs of my afflicted Soul, are ſo ſharp and piercing, that, did not my Divinity ſupport me, and preſerve my Life, I ſhould immediately, this very moment, die upon the place, *Matth.* 26. 38. *Stay a while, and watch with me.* You, who love me beſt, who have been always moſt familiar with me, be not *now* ſo unkind as to leave me in this ſad condition all alone: *Stay a while, and watch with me,* till my Storm of Grief blow over.

Dear Chriſtians, let us ſtay a while, and with theſe three Diſciples, not only admire, but ſearch into the cauſe of this great alteration in the Soul of our Redeemer. How was it poſſible that *now* He ſhould begin to fear ſo much that Death, which all his Life he had ſo much deſir'd? His Love for Man, and his Deſire of dying for us, where conceiv'd by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt, they came into the World with him, and ever after ſo employ'd his Thoughts, He ſcarce could talk of any thing elſe. Amongſt his Diſciples, his common Diſcourſe was of his *Sufferings*, the *Cup* he was to drink, his *Obligation*, his *Readineſs*, his *Impatience*, to fulfil the Pro-

Prophecies, *Luke* 12. 50. *I have*, ſays he, *a Baptiſm to be Baptiz'd with, and how am I ſtraitned, till it be accompliſh'd?* When the time drew nearer, He redoubled his Deſires of dying for us, *Luke* 22. 25. *with Deſire I have deſir'd to eat this Paſſeover with you.* 'And why? (ſays St. *Chryſoſtom*,) 'Becauſe it is a preparation to my Paſ-'ſion, which I have ſo long, ſo earneſt-'ly deſir'd. He knew, from the beginning, every Torment, every degree of it: Often reflected on each Circumſtance apart, and as often took delight in viewing all of them together. Upon Mount *Thabor*, when the Glory of his Bleſſed Soul ſhin'd through his Body, like the Sun through a tranſparent Cloud, upon the dazled Eyes of his Diſciples, giving them a glimpſe of the Eternal Glory we expect hereafter: Our Saviour *ſeem'd* to be as much delighted with the proſpect of his Paſſion, as with all the Joys of Heaven: And as upon another occaſion, when *his Diſciples pray'd him to eat*, Joh. 4. 31, 34. He told them, *My Meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and finiſh his work*; ſo when they deſir'd Him to ſtay, and *make Tabernacles*, Luke 9. 30, 33. it was his joy and delight, to *talk with* Moſes *and* Elias *of his Deceaſe*, his Paſſion *which he ſhould accompliſh, at* Hieruſalem, *ver.* 31.

Ah Chriſtians! you have reaſon to admire, and wonder, that the *God of all your Comfort*, 2 Cor. 1. 3. is now heavy and diſconſolate: But you will *fear* and *tremble*, more than wonder, if you ſeriouſly reflect, that all his *Grief* proceeded *chiefly* from the terrible *Idea* which He had of *Sin*; not *his*, but *ours*. *St.* Hierom *ſays*, *His* greateſt *Grief proceeded not from fear of Suffering, becauſe He came to ſuffer*: *But He* chiefly *griev'd for* Judas, *for the Scandal of the Apoſtles, and the Reprobation of the People*, &c.

Apud D. Tho. in Cat.

This agrees exactly with our Saviour's Words, *Luke* 23. 27, 28. to thoſe who follow'd Him to *Calvary*; when turning *to the Women who lamented Him*, He ſaid, *Daughters of* Hieruſalem, *weep not for me* only, *weep* alſo *for your ſelves, and for your Children*. Weep not for me; my Torments will be ſhort; weep for your ſelves; your Torments (if you do not *weep*, repent, and mend,) will be Eternal. Alas! the Torments which I willingly and freely ſuffer for your ſake, are Nothing to the Pains of Hell, which you for ever will endure, unleſs by Penitential Tears, mixt with my Blood, You waſh away your Sins, *ver.* 31. *If they do thus, in the green wood, what will they do in the dry?* If I, tho' Innocent, ſuffer thus for

for your Sins; you, who are Guilty, what are you like to ſuffer for your own? If I, who am true God, the only beloved Son of my Eternal Father, who never once offended Him; if, becauſe I interpoſe betwixt you and his Juſtice, I am thus ſeverely treated; what will become of miſerable Creatures, grievous Sinners, who ſo often have offended Him, if they do not join their Tears with mine; if they are not afflicted with me for their Sins, for which I die upon the Croſs? *Every Soul who upon this day is not afflicted, ſhall periſh*, Lev. 23. 29. *Every Soul who* thinks *upon this Day*, and *is not afflicted* with his Dying Saviour, is not heartily afflicted for thoſe Sins, for which he dies, *ſhall* certainly *periſh*.

Neither does it contradict, what commonly is ſaid, that One great Difference betwixt our Saviour and his Martyrs was, that by a Miracle of Grace, He gave them that undaunted Courage, which by a greater Miracle He now refus'd to himſelf. 'Tis true, He freely ſuffer'd in himſelf the *Natural* Fear of Death; to ſhew himſelf True Man as well as God; to let us ſee at once, the Weakneſs of our Nature, and the Power of Grace; and comfort us, by making it appear, that ſuch *Infirmities of*

how often his moſt precious Blood; would by our fault become the Poyſon of our Souls. He foreſaw in the whole courſe of our Lives, where, when, and how, we would reſiſt, and render ineffectual, all the Directions, Admonitions, and Exhortations of his Miniſters, and *fell into a bloody Sweat* at the very thought of our Ingratitude, by which the chief means of attaining Everlaſting Happineſs ſerve only, in the end, to juſtifie our Sentence of Eternal Miſery, *Iſa.* 35.4,6. *He bore our Griefs*, He *carried our Sorrows*, He took *upon him the Iniquities of us All*; and every one our moſt grievous Sins, appear'd to him in a more hideous ſhape, than ever it appear'd to any Creature.

Mortal Sin is as *Bad* as God is *Good*. It ſeparates us from our God, and leaves our Souls as *Empty* as our God is *Great*. So that as God is infinitely Good, the Malice of a Mortal Sin is infinitely Evil. As none of us can underſtand the infinite *Goodneſs* of the one, ſo none of us are able to conceive the infinite *Malice* of the other. Chriſt himſelf, as God, could *comprehend* them both: As Man, He *comprehended* neither. But yet, the clear and full *Idea* He had of it, was *proportion'd* to his Beatifick Viſion of God's Eſſence, and by conſequence, the *perfecteſt* that ever was.

was. His cleareſt *Sight*, and ardent *Love* of God, were in a manner infinite: So were his *Knowledge* and his *Hatred* of all Mortal Sin. And the *Impreſſion* this *Idea* made upon him, was the *chief*, if not the *only* Reaſon, why our Saviour could not hold from telling his Diſciples, *Mat.* 16. 38. *My Soul is exceeding Sorrowful, even unto Death.* His Soul was overwhelmed with ſuch aDeluge of Affliction, that his Grief, not being able to contain it ſelf within the Bounds of Nature, violently forc'd it ſelf through all his Pores, in Tears of Blood.

Ah my dear Jeſus! when ſhall I be able to make ſuch a perfect Act of true Contrition for my Sins, as Thou haſt made for mine! When ſhall I be able to ſay, *My Soul is exceeding Sorrowful, even unto Death!* When ſhall I lament my grievous Sins in Tears of Blood! *Jer.* 9. 1. *Give me*, at leaſt, *Water to my Head, and Fountains to my Eyes.* No Contrite Heart, but Thine, bleeds otherwiſe than at the Eyes; and 'tis (I hope) enough for me, if I can be ſo ſorry for my Sins, as to lament them all the days I have to live, and rather *Die* than ever *Sin* again.

IV.

The Saints Idea of Sin. How much it humbles Them.

THere's Nothing but the Grace of Jesus Chriſt, can make us Saints. There's nothing elſe can make us *clearly ſee*, and *heartily deteſt* the Malice of our Sins. The greater ſhare we have of this great Grace, the more we *ſee* it, and *deteſt* it; ſo much more we *fear* and *tremble* at the very thought of it; and as our Grace encreaſes, we grow every day more *humble* by remembring it.

To make this out, I need not write the Lives of all the Saints. A *Pattern* is enough to judge of all the *Piece*, especially ſuch a one as *S. John Climacus*, an ancient Father of the Church, has left behind him.

Deg. 5. *Ar.* 20. He aſſures us, his Relation *is no Fable*; He affirms, that what he

Art. 2. ſays, He *ſaw* with his own eyes;

Ar. 27. and that He was *a whole Month* in their Company.

'Draw near, *ſays he*, all You who have 'provok'd the Wrath of God by your 'Offences: Come, and hear the Wonders He was pleas'd to let me *ſee*, for 'my Edification: Be attentive to my 'Words, all You who have a mind to

're-

'reconcile your ſelves to God, by a ſin-
'cere Converſion.

'When I was, *ſays he*, in the *Monaſtery*
'*of Penitents*; I ſaw Men ſo extreamly
'*humbled* with the grievous weight of
'their Offences, that their Cries and
'Prayers to God, would even move the
'Stones themſelves. With Heads bow'd
'down, and Eyes upon the ground, I
'heard them ſay: *We confeſs, O Lord, we*
'*confeſs, that we deſerve to ſuffer all Cha-*
'*ſtiſements and Afflictions; becauſe our Sins*
'*are ſuch, that ſhould we Summon all the*
'*Univerſe to weep for us, the Tears of all the*
'*World would never make ſufficient Satisfa-*
'*ction: There remains one only thing we ask,*
'*one only thing we pray for*, Pſal. 6. 1. *That*
'*Thou never mayeſt* correct us in thy An-
'ger, nor chaſtiſe us in thy great diſplea-
'ſure; *but a little ſpare us, through thy in-*
'*finite Mercy. 'Tis enough, O Lord, that Thou*
'*deliver us from thoſe inexplicable Torments*
'*hidden in the Centre of the Earth. We dare*
'*not ask a full and perfect Pardon: We, who*
'*have not kept the holy Laws of our Profeſſi-*
'*on, but have broken them again, when Thou*
'*hadſt given us* the moſt endearing *Marks*
'*of Love and Mercy, in forgiving of our Sins.*

'Whoever ſaw them Laugh? Who-
'ever heard amongſt them any idle
'Talk? Whoever could obſerve, that
'any Paſſion tranſported them? Or any

'Anger

'Anger mov'd them? Alas! they hardly knew what Anger was; their great 'Affliction and continual Grief, had now 'extinguish'd in them all Emotions of 'Resentment. There was never known 'the least appearance of Dispute; the 'least lashing out in Discourse; the 'least sign of Vainglory. There was no 'Jollity of Feasting, no Concern for the 'Body, no Love of Ease and Pleasure, no 'Thought of Wine, no Use of Fruits, no 'Care for Delicacies pleasing to the Palate. The Desire of all such things was 'quite extinct. And after all, there was 'not to be found the least Censoriousness, or least appearance of an Inclination, to Judge their Neighbours.

'Some of them, now and then, would 'knock their Breasts; and, as if they 'were already at the Gate of Heaven, '*Open us*, said they, O *Judge of Mankind*, '*Open us the Gate of Happiness, which we* '*have shut by Sin.* Others would say, *Luke* '1. 79. *Give Light to us, O Lord, who sit* '*in Darkness, in the Shades of Death, and* '*guide our Steps into the way of Peace.* Others again; *Will the Almighty look upon* '*us any more? Is't possible to pay our Debts,* '*and satisfie for our Offences? Will our God,* '*once more afford us any Comfort? We are* '*laid in chains of Sin, and shall we one day,* '*hear him say, Come forth?* 'They

'They always had their Hour of 'Death before their Eyes; and ſome-'times they would ſay to one another; '*What will then become of us? What Sen-'tence will our God pronounce upon us? What 'will be our End? Shall we be then call'd 'home from Baniſhment, to which we have 'been hitherto condemn'd for our Offences? 'Shall ſuch Criminals as we, find any fa-'vour then? Such Sinners as we are, ſuch 'miſerable Wretches, cover'd with Confuſion 'and Darkneſs. Have our Prayers mounted 'to the Throne of God? Or, have they been 'rejected, as they well deſerve? If well re-'ceived, how far have they prevail'd? 'Have they obtain'd a full Diſcharge, or on-'ly Part? Alas! they could not have much 'force, proceeding from ſuch mouths, ſo ſinful, 'ſo impure, as Ours.*

'At other times, they thus diſcours'd 'their Fears and Doubts: *What think 'you Brethren? Do you think that we ad-'vance? Do you think, that we obtain the 'effect of our Demands? Do you think, that 'God will once again receive us? Do you 'think, He'll open us the Gates of Heaven? 'Who can tell,* (ſaid the Ninevites,) *who 'knows; but God may change the Sentence 'which He has pronounc'd againſt us? Tho' 'perhaps, He will not free us from the rigo-'rous Chaſtiſements which we have deſerv'd.*

'How-

'However, Let us labour all we can, and do 'whatever we are able. If He open us the 'Gate of Heaven, we are happy; if He does 'not, He is Juſt: And therefore, never let us 'ceaſe to bleſs Him. Doubtful, as we are, of 'what may be our Deſtiny, we muſt continue 'all our Life, ſtill knocking at the door. Per-'haps our Importunity, our Conſtancy, and our 'Perſeverance, may find Admittance in the 'End.

Behold the Language of the Saints! Conſider, how their Fear and Trembling *humbles* them, in Preſence of their angry God. Conſider the *Idea* which They have of Sin; how different it is from what we generally have. Conſider the *Impreſſion* which it makes upon them, and compare it with our Stupidneſs, our Hardneſs, our Inſenſibility. Conclude with ſhame and ſorrow, that this Difference 'twixt them and us, proceeds not from their having been much greater *Sinners* than we are, but from our being much leſs *Saints*, than They.

'When any of theſe Penitents drew 'nigh the Hour of Death, how Terri-'ble, how Lamentable was the Specta-'cle! Theſe Bleſſed Criminals, when 'any one of their Companions was up-'on the point of leaving them, They 'All ſurrounded him, with aking Hearts, 'and

'and weeping Eyes, to ask him, *How do* 'you find your ſelf, *Dear Brother, Dear Com-* 'panion in our Miſeries and Sufferings? 'What ſay you now? What do you hope? 'What do you think? Have you obtain'd what 'you have labour'd for, with ſo much pain? 'Or, is your labour loſt? Are you arriv'd at 'the Port? Or, are you not? Have you a 'full Aſſurance of your Happineſs? Or, have 'you only an uncertain Hope? Do you find 'your ſelf in perfect Liberty of Mind? Or, 'are you yet in Trouble and Anxiety? Have 'you heard already, in the Secret of your 'Soul, a Voice, which tells you, Matth. 9. 2. 'Your Sins are forgiven you? Or, do you 'ſeem to hear that formidable Sentence, Pſal. '9. 17. The Wicked ſhall be turn'd into 'Hell? *What ſay you, Brother? Tell us, we* 'conjure you, tell us now ſincerely; that by 'knowing what Condition you are in at pre-'ſent, we may gueſs, what State we may be 'in, one day, our ſelves.

'To theſe Demands, ſome of theſe 'dying Penitents made Anſwer, *Pſal.* '66. 20. *Bleſſed be God, who has not turn'd a-* 'way my Prayer, nor his Mercy from me. 'Others, in a doleful Tone reply'd, *Pſ.* '124. 4. *Can our Soul go over the Stream of* 'Waters, which are like to overwhelm us? 'This they ſaid, not being yet aſſur'd of 'their Salvation; but conſidering with

'fear

'*fear* and *trembling*, what might happen 'to them in the terrible Accompt which '*now* was nigh at Hand. And others an-'ſwer'd more uncomfortably; *Woe be to* '*the Soul that has not kept inviolably all the* '*Laws of its Profeſſion. See, the Hour is* '*come, the only Hour in which we ſhall begin* '*to know our State for all Eternity.*

Theſe Bleſſed Penitents, for one Relapſe, did *Penance*, the ſevereſt they were able to invent: And we, for numberleſs Relapſes, many of them worſe than theirs, do *none* at all. Theſe Penitents *Preſever'd* in the ſame Auſterities till Death, their *Penance* had no End: We ſtill Perſevere in our Sins, our Penance never begins. Their *Fear* and *Trembling*, their profound *Humility*, went hand in hand with all their *Penance* and *Perſeverance*: Our *Confidence* and *Unconcern'dneſs*, our extravagant *Preſumption*, always keep an equal pace with our *Tepidity* and *Slothfulneſs*. Dear Chriſtians, give me leave to ask, Why all this *difference* 'twixt them and us? A thouſand years, betwixt their Age, and this which now we live in, have they alter'd the *Almighty*? Has He leſs *Authority* to puniſh us? Or, we leſs *Obligation* to *Obey* Him, *Honour* Him, and *make* Him *Satisfaction*, if we do not? Is our God *leſs Juſt*, becauſe we more abuſe his

his Mercy? Or *more Merciful*, becauſe we leſs regard his Juſtice? Alas! Our *Blindneſs* is the only reaſon: We are blinder than they were; and therefore we are more *ſecure*, more *unconcern'd*, more *proud*, more *tepid*, and more *ſlothful*.

Jeſu, Son of David, *have Mercy on me*, Luke 18. 38. Thou Bleſſed Saviour of the World, *who enlightneſt every Man that comes into it*, John 1. 9. Open *once*, my Eyes, and keep them *ever* open, that I may continually *See* and *Love* thy Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Mercy, Juſtice; and by the Aſſiſtance of ſo great a Grace, perpetually *See* and *Hate* the Malice of my Sins. There's nothing but thy Grace that can *enlighten every Man that comes into the World*: There's nothing elſe can *Clear* my Underſtanding and *Enflame* my Heart: There's nothing elſe can make me truly *Contrite*, truly *Humble*. *Jeſu, Son of* David, *have Mercy on me, a Sinner*, Luke 18. 38 who am not in *the way*, nor going on, but *ſitting by the way-ſide*, v. 35. *begging* thy Aſſiſtance. Here I *ſit*, and wait thy *paſſing by*: My *Blindneſs* hinders me from doing any more: And even when I *Hear* Thee *paſs*, v. 36. I know not how to follow Thee. The Croud of all my Paſſions, Inclinations and Humours, and the multitude of my Engagements, Cares and Troubles,

Troubles, make a noiſe about me; ſuch a one (I fear) as will not let Thee hear me. When I offer to cry out for help, they try to ſtop my Mouth, and bid me *hold my peace*, v. 39. And therefore I cry out *ſo much the more, Jeſu, thou Son of* David, *have Mercy on me*, v. 39. Thou need'ſt not *ſtand* to *ask* me what I want, or *what I will that Thou ſhould'ſt do unto me*, v. 41. Thou, who know'ſt my Wants ſo infinitely better than my ſelf. The only Favour which I humbly beg, is, *that I may receive my Sight*, v. 41. Say only, to my Soul, as once Thou ſaid'ſt to that *Blind Man*, who was a Figure of me; ſay, *Receive thy Sight; thy Faith has ſav'd Thee*, v. 42. Say but this, (Thy Words are powerful, and make themſelves prove true.) Say only This, and then *immediately* I ſhall *receive my Sight, and follow Thee*, v. 43. I then ſhall follow thy Example. I ſhall follow thy Diſciples, and thy Saints. I then ſhall do fit Penance for my Sins, and ſhall Perſevere in it to the End. I then ſhall ſtudy how to puniſh every Paſſion, Inclination and Humour, which induc'd me to Offend Thee. I ſhall then be truly *Contrite*, truly *Humble*; I ſhall *Glorifie Thee* all my Life, *v.* 45. *and all the People, when They See* the Happy Change, ſhall *give* the *Praiſe to God.* Amen.

The

The CHARACTER Of a Good Chriſtian.

SECT. I.

The Perfection of his Duty.

D. *Sp. p.* 1. *c.* 3.

'WHoever ſeriouſly 'profeſſes the Re- 'ligion of Chriſt, 'and takes the 'Goſpel for the Rule of that Divine Re- 'ligion, making it his Buſineſs to acquire 'that Sanctity which Jeſus Chriſt de- 'mands of his Diſciples, is a *Chriſtian*. 'The *Goſpel* was not only writ for thoſe 'we call *Religious*. We are, all of us, 'Religious Perſons; of the Beſt and 'Firſt of all Religions, which is that of 'Jeſus Chriſt. We have a *Rule*, a *Habit*, 'and a *Founder*; we have *Vows* and *Exer- 'ciſes*. Chriſt firſt inſtituted and eſta- 'bliſh'd our Religion: He's the *Foun- 'der* of our Order. Innocence and San- 'ctity make up the *Habit*, we receive in 'Baptiſm. Our Promiſes of abrenoun-

'cing

'cing all the Pomps and Works of Sa-'tan, are our *Vows.* The Goſpel is our 'Rule; our Prayers, Penances, and gene-'rally all good Actions, are our *Exerciſes.*

Ibid. 'Do you think, the Goſpel was 'not written, ſays St. *Baſil*, every 'jot as much for Married Per-'ſons, as for Monks? Undoubtedly 'tis by this 'Rule, that both are to be Judg'd. 'Tis well, 'if married people can obtain God's pardon, 'for the faults committed in that State. In 'all things elſe, they are as much oblig'd to 'live like Saints, as the Religious are. The 'Tyes of Marriage, and Engagements of the 'World, will never juſtifie an idle Life; or 'any way diſpence with the laborious Task of 'living like a Chriſtian. 'Tis lawful to live 'in the World; but not, to live according to 'the Maxims of it. On the contrary, the more 'we are expos'd to the Temptations of the De-'vil, ſo much more we are oblig'd to uſe our 'utmoſt Care and Vigilance.

Ibid. 'Believe not, ſays St. Chry-'ſoſtom, that God expects from 'worldly Men, a Sanctity quite 'different from that of Monks. 'Tis true, in-'deed, that Thoſe may marry, and Theſe may 'not: But in all things elſe, the Caſe is e-'qual. They have Both receiv'd the ſame 'Laws, and Both are ſubject to the ſame Pu-'niſhments. When Jeſus laid his Curſe upon 'the

'*the Rich, and those who lead a jolly Life in* '*Sensuality and Pleasure, when he spoke of* '*the Evangelical Beatitudes*; *He spoke, not* '*only to* Religious, *but to all the Faithful,* '*and without the least exception. He was ne-* '*ver heard to say, That the Religious Man* '*shall suffer for his Sins, but not the Secular.* '*The difference we fancy in this Point, is only* '*an Invention of Men*; *it is not grounded in* '*the Word of God, who equally obliges All,* '*that will be sav'd, to keep his Laws. St.* 'Paul, *addressing his Discourse to Married* '*Persons, does not He require of them as great* '*a share of Sanctity, as we can find in the* '*most perfect Monks? What Disengagement he* '*prescribes to all of us! What Moderation in* '*our Cloaths, our Diet, and our use of Riches!* '1 Tim. 6 8. Having Food, *says he*, and 'Raiment, let us be contented, 1 *Cor.* 7. '29,30,31. They who are Married, *let* '*them* be, as if they were not; and They 'who use the World, as if they us'd it 'not; *What more can we expect from those* '*we call* Religious? *Let us therefore never* '*say, That Worldly Men are either* not ob-'lig'd, *or else* not able *to observe the Rules* '*of Christianity*; *and that* Religious *only* '*can attain to such sublime Perfection. There* '*is Nothing so pernicious as this false* Opini-'*on. It maintains the greatest part of Liber-*'*tines in their disorders, and encourages im-*

'*perfect*

'*perfect Souls to lead a looſe and lazy Life.*
'*Aſſure your ſelves, Our God requires of All,*
'*one Self-ſame Sanctity. The* Means *of our*
'*arriving to it, may be* different; *but yet*
'*Religious Perſons have no other* Aim *than*
'*we have. They deſign* to ſave themſelves,
'*and ſo do we. They are not to be ſav'd, but*
'*by the* narrow Way; *and we ſhall never*
'*be ſav'd, by walking in the* broad *one.*

'Hence it follows clearly,
Ibid. 'that the Goſpel being preach'd
'and made for All, we All are
'bound to follow it; we All muſt la-
'bour to acquire the Sanctity demand-
'ed by it; we muſt All be thoroughly
'perſuaded, that it is the only way which
'leads to Heaven, and that every other
'way is ſure to end in everlaſting Death.
''Tis true, the Methods and the Exerci-
'ſes which are us'd and follow'd in Reli-
'gious Houſes, to arrive to ſuch Perfe-
'ction, are quite different from what is
'uſually preſcrib'd to Worldly Perſons:
'But their *Vertues* always are the *ſame*,
'altho' their *Exerciſes* are not. Theſe
'two things we commonly confound;
'to wit, the *Exerciſes* and the *Vertues* of a
'Chriſtian. We imagine, for Example,
'that a *modeſt* and a homely *Dreſs*, is only
'fit for Cloiſters, where they always wear
'a certain *Habit*, poor and plain. We fancy
'that

'that the *Recollection* which is practis'd in 'Religious Houses, is a thing peculiar 'to their Character; because we find, 'that only They have certain Hours al- 'lotted them for keeping Silence. We 'imagine also, that a *Penitential* Life be- 'longs to none but them; because they 'Fast, and practise several Austerities 'commanded by Superiours.' Tis a great 'mistake. These *Vertues* all are *Evangeli-* 'cal: We find them in the Gospel, 'which is *ours* as much as *theirs*: They 'are prescrib'd to *all Men* by the *Common* 'Rule of Christianity: And, tho' we have 'not (as *Religious* have) so great Advan- 'tages to make the practise of them 'Uniform and Easie: Nevertheless, we 'All are indispensibly oblig'd to *have* 'them, and to *practise* them. Our *Mode-* 'sty, our Moderation must *be known to* 'All, Phil. 4 5. as well as theirs. Our *Re-* 'collection of Mind, must be preserv'd a- 'midst the multitude of our Employ- 'ments. We are equally oblig'd to *Mor-* 'tify and Circumcise our Heart, and to 'Extinguish in it, all our Sensual De- 'sires. The Precept of *Continual Prayer*, 'Thes. 5. 17. is as much for us as them. 'We are not bound to Sing in Choir, at 'certain Hours, as they do: But our 'Heart must be, as much as theirs, *conti-*

'nually

'*mually united* to our God, by *Loving* of 'him above all things. Tho' we have 'not made a *Vow of Poverty*, yet we muſt 'be, as well as They, entirely *diſengag'd* 'from all the *Riches* of the Earth, and 'never ſet our Hearts upon them, whilſt 'we uſe them. Tho' we have not *vow'd* '*Obedience*, we are all oblig'd, as much 'as they, to be attentive to the Precepts 'of our Founder *Jeſus Chriſt*, and pun-'ctually obſerve the leaſt of his *Com-'mandments*, Matth. 5. 19.

Behold the Duty of a Chriſtian! See how Generous, how Noble, how Heroical his *Reſolution* is, of making good the full Signification of his Name! He meets with an infinity of Obſtacles: But notwithſtanding all, He is reſolv'd to *Sacrifice* and *Save* himſelf: He is reſolv'd to uſe all *Violence*, whatever may be requiſite, to make his way to *Heaven*, and to *take it even by force*, Matth. 11. 12.

SECT. II.

His Contempt of the World.

S. Chryſoſtom. Hom. 24. *in Ep. ad Hebr.*

'HE always looks up-'on himſelf, as a 'meer Stranger in this 'World; and the conti-'nual Remembrance of his being *So*, is 'the Foundation and Root of all his 'Vertue.

'Vertue. He takes little pleaſure in em-
'ploying of his buſy thoughts about this
'Life, and the Affairs relating to it; but
'is like a baniſh'd Man, who lives unea-
'ſie in a Foreign Country; always look-
'ing homeward with extream Impati-
'ence, to ſee the Bleſſed Place which
'gave him Birth; and always doing all
'he can, to lay all things in readineſs for
'his Return, He never is Dejected with
'Adverſity, nor puft up with Proſperi-
'ty, which happen to attend his For-
'tune here; but paſſes unconcern'dly
'by, without regarding either; and
'without the leaſt ſtop in his way, pur-
'ſues his Journey, like a Traveller; who
'longs to be at Home, and thinks of no-
'thing elſe, but how to make haſte thi-
'ther. And this is the reaſon, why our
'God obliges him to ſay, in his daily
'Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come*; that he may
'always have before his Eyes, the hap-
'py Day which is to be his Laſt, and
'generouſly ſcorn to value any tranſi-
'tory Honour, Profit, Pleaſure, which
'he meets with upon Earth.

'A *Chriſtian*, by theſe
'Noble Sentiments of
'true and ſolid Wiſdom,
'mounts to ſuch a
'height above the reach

S. Chryſoſtom. *Hom.* 15. *ad Popul. Antiochen.*

'of all this World, that He is hardly 'capable of feeling, much leſs of admi-'ring, whatſoever paſſes in it. He is like 'a Man, who from the top of an aſpi-'ring Mountain, takes a view of all be-'low him, and can hardly ſee the Towns 'and Cities, which appear like Mole-hills; 'where the numerous Inhabitants, like 'ſwarms of Ants, run up and down, 'and follow eagerly their little Trade 'of hoarding up a petty Treaſure, which 'is nothing to his purpoſe. All his *Trea-'ſure* and his *Heart*, are both in Heaven. 'There his Loving Eye is generally 'fix'd; and, if he now and then look 'down upon the Riches, Glory, Power, 'Honour of this miſerable World, they 'all ſeem trifling Matters; all ſuch 'Things are little, inconſiderable, and 'contemptible, to Him.

S. Chryſoſtom. *Hom.* 11. *in ep.* 1. *Cor.*

'And yet, he cannot 'juſtly be accus'd of 'Pride, becauſe he 'thinks, the wiſeſt Po-'liticians are but *Fools*; 'their Riches, *Shadows*; and all their 'Pleaſures, *Dreams*; and all their Titles, 'Dignities, and Honours, only *Childrens 'Baubles*. No; it cannot juſtly be ac-'counted Pride. 'Tis certainly the grea-'teſt Wiſdom to *Submit* our Judgments, 'and

'and conform them, to the External
'Truth of God himself; and judge of
'things as they are truly in themselves.
'Or otherwise we must allow, that *Solo-*
'*mon* himself was guilty of Presumption
'and Arrogance; when, after a full Try-
'al, after long and sad Experience, He
'pronounc'd, that all the World is *Vani-*
'*ty of Vanities, and nothing else but Vanity.*

'He labours all he can
'to make his *Soul* become
'a Heaven upon Earth;
'and fails not to suc-
'ceed in such a Noble
'Enterprize. The Heaven which we see,
'and so admire, is but an Emblem of his
'Happiness. As Heaven is enlightned
'by the Rising Sun, his Soul is more en-
'lightned by the Grace of God, the Sun
'of Justice, which arises without setting,
'in his Heart. As Heaven always is the
'same; still beautiful and bright within
'it self, altho' the midnight Darkness
'seem to alter and obscure it; so his
'Soul is still the same; 'tis always easie
'and content within it self, altho' He live
'obscurely, in disgrace or poverty, and
'seem a miserable Man to those who lit-
'tle understand the Secret of his Happi-
'ness. As Heaven is so high above the
'Winds and Storms, that the most violent

S. Chrysostom. *Hom.* 16. *in Epist. ad Heb.*

'disturbance of the Air can never reach 'it; so the Soul of a good Christian, even 'when the World combines to make him 'suffer most, receives no harm at all. His 'Treasure is in Heaven, and his Heart is 'with it. He's above the reach of all 'that they can do. His Heart is rais'd to 'such a height, that when he takes a pro-'spect of the Earth below, He sees no dif-'ference 'twixt Men and Pismires. Nei-'ther are the Poor the only Objects that 'seem little in his Sight; but Kings 'themselves, and Generals of Armies, 'Politicians, Usurers, and what you 'please, seem every jot as little and con-'temptible as They. The Difference of 'Poor and Rich makes no impression up-'on Him; no more than when he sees, 'amongst a Swarm of little Pismires, 'some creep loaded, and others empty.

S Chrysostom. *Hom. 5. ad Popul. Antio.*

'What can Men do 'to such a Man as This, 'suppose they have a 'a mind to make him 'miserable? Will they 'rob him of his Money? All his Riches 'are in Heaven. Will they Banish him 'from home? He has no other *Home* but 'Heaven; and it is not in their Power 'to Banish him from thence. Will they 'lay him fast in Chains? His Conscience 'will

'will ſtill be free: And, for his part, He 'fears no other Chains but thoſe of Sin. 'Or, will they kill him? When they 'have done this, They have no more to 'do; and even then, His Soul, will live 'for ever, his Body one day riſe again.

'A Man, who lives 'not but for Jeſus 'Chriſt, is quite above 'the reach of all Miſ- 'fortunes that can 'threaten him. Provided that He will not 'freely and deliberately hurt himſelf, No 'Man alive can have the leaſt advan- 'tage over Him. He's invincible at all 'Arms. The loſs of his Goods is no Af- 'fliction to him, becauſe he well conſi- 'ders, that we all bring nothing with us 'at our Birth; and that we all ſhall car- 'ry nothing with us at our Death. The 'vain deſires of Reputation and Honour 'cannot ſeize his Heart; becauſe he 'knows, that all our Converſation ought 'to be in Heaven. All the Injuries and 'Outrages he meets with, are not able to 'provoke him; he's a Chriſtian: And, 'being truly ſuch, he fears but one great 'Danger of one only loſs; the danger of 'offending God, and loſing of his Favour; 'all things elſe, as Baniſhment and Po- 'verty, with all the greateſt and moſt

S. Chryſoſtom. *lib. 2. ad Theod. lapſum. c. 3.*

'dangerous Extremities, he values not 'at all; and even Death it ſelf, which o-'thers think ſo Terrible, is always moſt 'agreeable, moſt comfortable, and moſt 'welcom, whenſoe're it comes.

SECT. III.

His deſire of Heaven.

THE Scripture generally repreſents a Chriſtian, as a Perſon diſengag'd and ſeparated from the World. *If you were of the World*, ſays our Saviour, St. Jo. 15. 19. *the World would love his own; but becauſe you are not of the World, and I have choſen you out of the World, therefore the World hates you*, 1 Jo. 2. 15. He *loves not the World, nor the things that are in the World.* Becauſe, *if any Man love the World, the love of* God *is not in him*, Rom. 12. 2. He is *not conform'd to the World, but transform'd by the renewing of his Mind, that He may prove what is the good, the acceptable and perfect Will of God*, 1 Cor. 7. 31. He *uſes the World, as if he us'd it not*, Gal. 6. 14. *The World is crucify'd to him, and He is to the World*, Coloſ 3. 3. He is *dead, and his Life is hid with Chriſt in God*, Jam. 1, 27. His *Religion pure and undefil'd*, is that by which he *keeps himſelf unſpotted from the World*, 1 Pet 2. 11. He *abſtains from all deſires which war againſt the Soul*, becauſe he is *a Stranger and a Pilgrim* in the World. But that which moſt inclines him

him to deſire the Happineſs of Heaven, is his *knowing*, that as long as he is here, *He's Abſent* from his God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6.

'No wonder he ſo much
'*deſires* to be in Heaven: D. Sp. Par.
'All his Comfort is his *Hope* 2. Ch. 21.
'of being there. The *Gate*
'ſo ſtrait; the *Way* ſo narrow; the con-
'tinual *Violence* ſo neceſſary to be us'd:
'The *Croſs* he daily bears; the *Self-Denial*
'which he always practiſes, *Luke* 13. 3.
'The *Penance*, without which *we All ſhall*
'*Periſh*, if we do not mortify our Paſſi-
'ons, curb our Humours, and reſiſt our
'Inclinations: All this put together, is
'enough to make a Chriſtian Life, ſo
'painful, troubleſom, and diſagreeable;
'that, 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *if in this life only He had*
'*hope*, he would *of all Men, be moſt miſerable.*

'Tis no wonder therefore he *Ibid.*
'ſo much *deſires* the *Sight* of
'God, which only can deliver him from
'all the miſeries he labours under, Ch. 22.
'Tis the great Affliction of the Juſt;
'to ſee themſelves ſo far from *Sion*, ſepa-
'rated from their God, and baniſh'd from
'their Heavenly *Jeruſalem*. Altho' the
'Riches of the World were all their
'own, they ſtill would think themſelves
'Unfortunate, becauſe their Treaſure is
'not *here*; 'tis only to be found *hereafter*.

'They

'They as earneſtly *deſire* the Happineſs 'of Heaven, as a Hart long hunted *thirſts* 'for Water.' Tis a *Duty* indiſpenſibly in- 'cumbent upon all true Chriſtians, *to* 'Deſire it above All Things.

'Hear S. *Auſtin, He who finds* Ibid. 'himſelf at Eaſe on Earth; *who is* Ch. 21. 'contented to live always Here; 'and finds his greateſt Joy and Sa- 'tisfaction in this World, will never enter Hea- 'ven. If you ask the Reaſon, he replies: 'Becauſe He has not in his Heart the *Love* 'of God, whoever does not Sigh, and above all 'things Wiſh, for the enjoyment of Eternal 'Life. Examine well your Heart. If God ſhould 'promiſe you a long Life upon Earth, and tell 'you, You ſhall here enjoy whatever you can 'wiſh for; Riches, Pleaſures, Honours, Health, 'Proſperity, and what you pleaſe beſide, 'ſhall every where attend you Only; You 'ſhall never ſee me; You ſhall never have a 'a Share with me in Heaven: Would you be 'content? Whoever is in ſuch a Diſpoſition, does 'not yet begin to love Him above all Things.

'Hear the Royal Pro- *Ibid.* Ch. 22. 'phet: Hear the Language 'of his *Love. As the Hart pants* 'after Water, ſo my Soul pants after Thee, my 'God, Pſal. 42. 1, 2, 3. *My Soul is thirſty for* 'Thee, O Thou *living God*, the only Life 'and Comfort of my Soul. *My Tears have* 'been my Entertainment *Day and Night*;

'and

'and 'tis the only Eaſe of my impatient 'Grief, to have the liberty of weeping in 'thy abſence. *When ſhall I appear before my 'God?* When once that happy Day ap-'proaches, *when* I once *behold thy Face, I 'ſhall be ſatisfied*, Pſ. 17. 15. but never ſhall 'be ſatisfied till then. 'Tis this, and on-'ly this *One Thing, I* always *have deſir'd of* 'Thee, *that I may dwell in* thy *Houſe* for 'ever, *and behold thy Beauty*, Pſ. 27. 4.

'All God's *Children* ſay the 'ſame; they daily pray to their 'Eternal *Father*, that his *Kingdom come*: 'And their *deſire* of Everlaſting Life, tho' 'ſometimes out of mind, is *always* in their 'Heart. By this, they *pray* inceſſantly. By 'this, they are attentive to *God's Preſence*, 'in the midſt of thoſe Employments and 'Affairs, which otherwiſe would eaſily 'divert them from the *Thoughts* of him. 'By This, they frequently *Recal* their 'wandring Thoughts, *Renew* their decay-'ing Fervour, *Enflame* their cooling Love, 'Encourage their deſponding Hearts, and 'march a great deal *faſter* towards Hea-'ven. *When the Scripture commands us*, ſays 'S. *Auſtin, to Pray always*; *we are not there-'fore oblig'd to be always on our knees, or al-'ways ſinging Pſalms in Choir: We only are 'oblig'd to have continually, in the bottom of 'our Heart, a true Deſire to leave this Earth, 'and enter into Heaven. This continual deſire* *Ibid.*

muſt

'*muſt ſtill perſevere in our Heart. We al-*
'*ways muſt lament, and ſigh, and ſay, I am a*
'*Captive and a Pilgrim, I am far from*
'*Home, I am not with my God.* 'Tis true (S.
'*Auſtin* adds,) a Juſt Man may divert
'himſelf ſometimes; and ſpend ſome
'hours, in ſuch Employments as appear
'quite different from *gaining Heaven.*' Tis
'alas! the Servitude of his Captivity,
'which thus obliges him to work for the
'*Egyptians*, whilſt he is a Slave to *Pha-*
'*raoh.* But however, in the midſt of all
'his *Slavery*, He never can forget the
'*Land of Promiſe*; He laments, He ſighs,
'He always wiſhes to be there: And
'Thus He *always prays* to God, that He
'will pleaſe to grant him the Poſſeſſion
'of that Sovereign Good, which only
'can Suffice to make Him *truly* and *for*
'*ever* Happy.

F I N I S.

VIſâ Approbatione Eximii ac Perillustris Domini, *** Presbyteri, S. Theologiæ Doctoris, *** approbo ego Librum Anglicano Idiomate compoſitum, cui titulus eſt, *A Contrite and Humble Heart; with Motives and Conſiderations to prepare it.* D. D. 16 Martii. 1693.

N. J. DELA V. *S. T. Doctor & Prof. Prim. Libr. Viſitator & Cenſor, & pro temp. V. D. Rector.*

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